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MAULEVERER'S DIVORCE:

A STORY OF WOMAN'S WRONGS.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF

"WHITEFRIARS," "THE CITY BANKER," &c.

"Laws are that make the crimes that they condemn:
They have judged us; now let us judge of them!"—*L'Estrange.*

"Pelican's food, pelican's food, my masters! with mine own beak I rend my breast, and ye feed at the scatterings."—*A. Marlowe.*

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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DEDICATION.

TO . THE . ILLUSTRIOUS . MINISTER . OF . ENGLAND.
CHOSEN . BY . A . SOVEREIGN'S . GRACIOUS . WILL.
BUT . WHOM . A . POPULAR . ELECTION . WOULD . HAVE . PLACED .
ON . THE . SAME . WORLD-COMMANDING . EMINENCE .
A . WOMAN . WHO . IS . GRATEFUL . TO . HIM .
FOR . THE . UNSHAKEN . COURAGE . AND . RESOLVE .
WITH . WHICH . DESPISING . THE . CLAMOURS . OF .
INTERESTED . AND . BIGOTED . FACTIONS .
HE . FIRST . OF . ALL . ENGLISH . STATESMEN .
HAS . COMMENCED . THE . GENEROUS . JUSTICE .
OF . RESTORING . THE . SEXES . TO . A . LEGAL . EQUALITY .
REVERENTLY . INSCRIBES . THIS . MEMORIAL . OF . THE . WORKINGS .
OF . THE . BARBAROUS . LAWS . HITHERTO . SUPREME .
IN . WRONG . OVER . HERS .

MAULEVERER'S DIVORCE:

A STORY OF WOMAN'S WRONGS.

CHAPTER I.

A PROTEST.

A PROTEST?—Yes! to protest is all that is left to the victims of an injustice organized, merciless, irresistible, as is this colossus of legal oppression, whose tramp has bruised my heart into the dust: where, if it yet quivers, it is only with the life of agony!

I do not deceive myself. *Vox clamantis*—the voice of one crying in the desert—mine may

well be. Judgment has been given—sentence pronounced. Opinion has spoken from her most solemn tripods, and her oracles are decisive on my guilt. My good name is doubtless for ever gone. I am an exile in a remote land: my best hope to mingle speedily with its alien earth; shame-blasted, friendless; deserted by all but the consciousness of my innocence, and belief in the justice of God. At times even, in the extremity of my sufferings, seeing so few signs of its visible action among men, yielding to the blasphemy of doubt in that sole eternal refuge and appeal!

I do not deceive myself. I am aware that even this cry from the depths, this utterance of anguish through the bars of the dungeon; this true and dispassionate statement which I desire to lay before the world, will only, in the opinion of many, be esteemed an aggravation of my declared offences against its laws.

Not for my own sake, indeed, do I break the silence of despair into which I sank in the presence of that overwhelming wrong: when gazing incredulously at its snowy robes and balanced scales, I learned that the true name of Law, when it confronts woman, is Oppression!

Not for my own sake! What could even the reversal of the decree do for me now? Could it restore me my dreams in the fool's paradise of love and trust: from which I woke to find myself wrapped through every limb in the folds of that unimaginable serpent whose deadly breath had, until then, seemed to me like the fannings of a sunny breeze from neighbouring thickets of roses and balm?—If, indeed, my honour could be cleared of those foul stains that besmirch it!—Yet what were now even the full recognition of my innocence?—only the presentation of a whiter shroud!

Not for my own sake. If I speak now, it is but in the hope that my words may reach the notice of some more impartial and clear-eyed spirits, and chiefly among those least inclined to pardon offences of the kind I am charged withal; who will yet calmly review the circumstances I present to their judgment. And then perchance, seeing cause to doubt the justice of a condemnation passed without the possibility of defence, or explanation on the part of the sufferer, such may interpose to save others of my unfortunate sex from the gripe of those barbarous laws whose tangling writhe has but just

released me to perish, mangled and crushed in every nerve and fibre of my being!

Better it were, indeed, could I allow some longer pause for the ferment of feeling to subside, that I might speak with more of the calm and sobriety of a judicial deposition, almost the solemnity of which I claim for these papers. But what I have to say I must say speedily. The seal of an eternal silence will soon be placed on my lips. I feel very surely how vain are all the well-meant consolations and assurances held out to me by medical humanity. It could not be but that the strain of so much and such varied anguish, on merely mortal heartstrings, must at last rend the wondrous organ itself, where the mystical union of flesh and spirit has established its most intimate relations. My heart is broken, not merely in a moral—almost in a physical sense. There is a name, I know, for my malady in books of medical science, which will suffice to declare a cause for the catastrophe at hand. There is no occasion to search farther. No coroner's inquest needs be held on one who perishes so much in the established order of things. There is no murderer in the case—no murderess! *Requiescat in pace.* She is gone.

We are innocent of her blood: it flowed over no knives of ours—from no wound that you can indicate! Bury her quietly, and all is well. What is the meaning of that pale face glaring from amid the darkness of death at *us?* We slew her not! You may see in the books of record, that she died of a disease fatal to many: hers is no peculiar case: not at all!

So be it. But at least let the imprimatur of the dread licenser, which must be stamped on these pages before they meet the eyes of any stranger, be some guarantee for the integrity of purpose and feeling with which they are penned.

What, indeed, have I to gain, standing in my desolation on the verge of this dark promontory of existence, over which an invisible, but irresistible hand is urging me into the boundless void beyond—by attempting to silence a few clamorous voices in the midst of the countless throngs that follow me, fate-driven, to the same all-unfathomed depths?

And yet, so rooted is the awe of opinion in which mankind, and chiefly the hapless division of it, women, are reared and perish, that doubtless my actuating motive is to endeavour to set

myself, in some degree, right, before its incensed tribunal. Doubtless it would mitigate the cruelty of my fate—somewhat assuage the bitterness of the tears in which I weep away the powers of my existence, if I could think it possible—yet possible—Oh, surely, surely, it cannot be altogether *impossible*—being innocent as I am—to convince the world of my innocence! Will men lend ear only to the echoes of falsehood and calumny, and turn deafly or deridingly away from the sobbing appeal of truth's own accents, be mocked and confused in that artful maze of sounds?

Mine may be made in vain. But I shall have done what in me lies to clear the memory of the mother of my dear and only child of the dark stains injustice, and worse than Judas treachery, have cast upon my fame in life. And it will somewhat soothe the anguish of my darkening hours perchance to think that, believe what they may of me still, some hearts more generous and compassionate than those of the fell majority whose ban is upon me, may learn to pity the doom they would not have aided to inflict.

I will speak the truth. But the whole truth.

Nought in malice! Is mine a condition in which to harbour even the just indignation of the wrongs I have suffered? But only the whole truth can answer the purpose of my vindication.

And if this full utterance seems to assail; if it strikes, if it blasts, like heavenly fire descending on guilty heads — they alone are to blame, who have raised theirs unblenchingly, before God and man, in attestation of the blackest perjuries!

I will speak the whole truth, and, I trust, nothing but the truth! Admitted, that I may deceive myself; form erroneous estimates; see through distorting glasses of passion and prejudice. Well! I do not offer what I have to allege as the decisions of a judge, but as the pleadings of one accused, who has been allowed no other tribunal, and who kisses the marble tome of death in attestation of all she shall aver. Let them contradict me who can! The most criminal of those whom I must accuse, will doubtless be my survivors. Let them refute me, and fear no further replication.

Not only of my enemies: of myself also, in all the sincerity of my soul, will I strive to utter

the full reality. Of some whom I love—Ah, rather whom I *have* loved—so infinitely dearer than myself; I will not hide facts which it will yet wring my inmost heart to divulge. And let the fidelity with which I shall speak of persons most dear to me—of my own conduct—not extenuating wherein it was blamable, (for in much it might be — it was!) an additional security that I do not exaggerate when I speak of my injurers and betrayers.

Perhaps, also, I may find some alleviation to the loneliness and despair that environ me, even in recalling the strife and struggle of my long, strange agony?

I feel now that I was to blame, to interpret so literally the advice of my friendly physicians, when they urged upon me the necessity of seeking change of climate and removal from the scene of my calamities—transporting myself to this distant and foreign solitude.

And yet, what joy did it not give me, at first, to know that I had escaped from the gaze of every eye that could glance with a recognizing ken upon me! Sharpened, dagger-like, in the kindest and most merciful, by the involuntary associations of shame and misery and degra-

dation stirred in their minds! Ay, and most cruelly, most piercingly of all, where pardon, where even a relenting tenderness, would seem to dull the point—to turn the edge of the stroke! These I found more difficult to sustain than the harshest condemnation. Against that I could oppose patience or defiance, as the mood of my troubled spirit swelled in storm, or sunk in impotent resignation: infinite scorn, or as boundless a sadness—all but the refutation, my betrayers had placed out of my power! But how was I to endure it, when women notoriously guilty of the criminality falsely imputed to me—but unbranded by any public decree—turned from me, snuffing the higher air in disdain? Or, worst of all, when the abandoned of my sex hailed me as a fitting associate, and welcomed me with a terrible cordiality into their ignominious society? I fled—and I am here.

Here, in this far island of the Atlantic Main, whose genial air is said to restore health to the invalid, or at least to stay for awhile the progress of those vulture-maladies that feed their devouring beaks in the breasts of their victims. The name of Madeira satisfied my medical advisers. And I, too, poor, worn-out wretch! strove to believe in

their persuasions, that a total change of external circumstances might produce some inner renovation. And yet, I scarcely desired to live, and it is not a disappointment to me to find how day by day I grow weaker and weaker, and take a foretaste, in continually deepening and lengthening swoons, of the eternal repose and quietude to which a mournfully-beautiful angel has summoned me, under the white shadow of his wings. The mind mirrors all changes, it is true; but darkened by calamities like mine, it reflects the sun itself beamlessly! Scenery, as profuse and luxuriant, but of a milder and unburning Africa, is around me. And yet what have I forgotten? what effaced, of anguished recollection from those sharp-etched tablets of my brain?

I have chosen my brief abode near the shore of that ever-murmuring sea, which, to my stricken heart, seems to echo the universal wailing of afflicted humanity. I am almost the solitary tenant of a half-ruinous old Portuguese villa, whose owners perished in the pestilence that desolated the island shortly before my arrival. Perished all, save only an orphan heiress, to whose benefit, I am pleased to think, I inhabit this else deserted property.

There is little resemblance between my blue eyed, golden-locked Evelyn, and this dark-brown, sultry-gazing child of the south, the young Rosaura d'Oliveira. Yet inexpressibly poignant, though tender emotions, swell in my heart, when on her occasional visits to her former home, from her convent, Rosaura fills the house with the airy spirit and gaiety of childhood. Evelyn was of a stilly, timid nature: sensitive and shy as a woodland fawn. This young girl flutters about like a bird; as free and careless of restraint: yet her very laugh brings tears into my eyes! She has forgotten her dead mother, I feel, when I listen to that laugh—light, quick, brilliant as the flapping of a sail in a bright sudden breeze that makes the sunshine shudder from the woof! And can my child still remember her mother, living, but dead to her?

Yet, this joyous-hearted young thing have I too seen weep, when the strange Senhora from beyond the blue, unknown waters, yields to the dark sway of the spirit that possesses her, and indulges perforce in the overflow of a grief as infinite and unexplorable to her girlish apprehension.

And while this foreign child has learned to

compassionate sorrows that have no claim to project their shadows on her path, my own is taught to despise, to contemn, perhaps to execrate the very name, of the mother to whom she might have proved the only healing consolation!

But let me not dwell on this. I came to this land—was it not so?—to forget. And surely if the oblivion I was taught to hope for in change of external objects, is to be found, it should be here.

Yonder background of black volcanic mountains, towering to the skies, and pallid on their summits with eternal snow, bears but little resemblance to the soft, purple-green swell of the hills that bound the prospect where my saddest recollections so continually revert. The precipitous landscape beneath my gaze, where the palm tree flourishes in the midst of vineyards that cover every steep and elevation of a chaotic confusion of rock and ravine that seems hurling headlong downward to the sea, as if madness could work in material nature also — how should this contrasted scene compel my memory to return to those tranquilly verdant vales where I spent all the few happy years of my life?

What a daybreak is this that comes rosying like a Titanic Venus, from the bosom of the wide sweep of ocean, below the windows of my rock-perched Madeira home—from amid waves coloured like vasty gleams of mother-of-pearl, to a golden-sanded shore! How little recalling to the mind the humid sunshine and narrow mountain streams of my native province! And yet, even now, gazing on this gorgeous vision, how does it fade away in the mist of tears from before my eyes, and the dun tranquillity of the lowland landscapes of Glamorganshire fills the whole scene instead, and seems to invite me to return, to find a more congenial grave under its dark green sod!

Were I in a dungeon I might hope to escape; but from the prison of these recollections how can I steal or force my way?

Nightly in dreams am I borne from this fantastic Moorish-looking ruin I inhabit—or at least that my body inhabits—home to those stately halls of my ancestors, which unlicensed strangers have now assigned to themselves as an inheritance; and wandering through every familiar chamber I encounter the icy-glaring eyes of those spectres of the past, that for me haunt

them all! Those of the living are the most fearful of all these apparitions; shed the most charnel gloom around them — for they have died, to me, a death more utter and hopeless than that of the external clay! Do I affright them as they do me when my shadow crosses theirs? For they have only succeeded, by form of law, in banishing me from that ancient abode which my ancestors had dwelt in for five hundred years! No Law of the Land decree can bar the gates to my accusing memory!

Yet all my reminiscences need not, shall not be, of gloom and misery only. Bright gleams of happiness have at times crossed my path. Reverting my gaze, that tangled forest maze of existence I have traversed, seems pierced with oases of splendid sunshine. A verdure, as of Eden, clothes the dark turf. Fountains sparkle from the barren rocks. Birds sing in the woodland recesses, a thousand times more sweetly and multitudinously than the innumerable wild canaries that pour their dazzling, zigzag melodies so unceasingly even now on my ear, from their thickets of the myrtle and arbutus. I was not born for misfortune only! God had endowed me with a spring of loving and happy

emotions in the depths of my being—run to waste and ruin, or stayed in choked and noisome cisterns, as the living streams have been! I lacked not altogether some wit and an understanding spirit, however little I may seem to have displayed of the worldly acumen and energies of self-preservation, these are supposed to bestow, in the practical conduct of my life. I had once a keen and relishing sense of the humorous. Do I grow boastful when I say, that the faculty of communicating my feelings and thoughts, with vivacity and strength, was even too fully granted me?

Shall it be said that my intelligence was defective because, dazzled by the radiant simulation of the virtues and affections that surrounded me, nothing warned me to rend those shining robes away, and make espial of the fiendish forms beneath? What wisdom would it have been that should have exhorted me to pluck aside what I imagined were true and smiling visages, to discover that they were only marvellously well-fitted masks? Was the beginning of life to inherit at once the sorrowful legacy of the close—the lamp at the stern to illuminate the waves as they severed beneath the prow?

As it is, I seem to have turned a gaze at once microscopic and all-embracing on my past career. I contemplate the fearful drama from so many points of view, that at last I comprehend it in its entirety! The secrets of character stand revealed before me; the hidden springs of action are made apparent. Discoveries crowd upon me with every new retrospection. At times I pause, amazed to behold through what a shifting phantasmagoria, events, persons, things pass, ere they assume their real forms and consistency! It is a landscape involved in mists and fogs, that gradually lift; and with every change of vapour, every dart of sunlight, reveal some unexpected combination of terrible and precipitous scenery, until the whole aghast and hideous landscape glares forth!

My main difficulty will indeed be to preserve unmixed the double consciousness I now possess, of the false shows, and of the actualities, that presented themselves to me in that changeful masquerade of life.

Up to the moments when circumstances, or their own weariness and defiance, revealed to me all the terror of the smiling seemings by which I was surrounded, does it behove

me still to conceal my knowledge of facts and persons, so tardily, so wofully acquired? Must I still gather flowers on the edges of the precipices, as if still unconscious of the fate awaiting me? Must I fail to recognize, in the trusted friend, the sacrificer; in the fondly-loved husband, the most merciless of foes; in that glory of bright and chivalrous youth and love, so black and impenetrable a core of treason and betrayal?

I know not how it will befall. I have formed no plan. What my memory suggests, that will I put on record. The writing on the wall may glare and menace awhile, uninterpreted, though the prophets of fulfilment, the most assured of all, stand by! I may yet again, perchance, put on, with a joyous air, those festival robes in which I know now that I marched to destruction!

I cannot preserve this composure, I am aware, throughout the recital I have undertaken. I am not yet subdued to the quality of the earth with which I am soon to mingle. The anguish of pity and regret with which at times I lament over the ruins I find in my own heart, and so lavishly strewed over the waste of my recollections, will change, on some occasions, its heart-

broken moan to a cry of indignation, or of wild appeal. Moments there are when my soul howls, like the famished panther, amidst the shattered columns and defaced capitals of that fallen temple of existence, which the immeasurable desert hastens to swallow wholly up in its sandy hurricanes!

If, however, at times I shall be thought to speak with passion and distemperature, I trust that, before the close, it will be given me to enter into the calm befitting the end of all mortal turmoil and vexation: into which the wildest tempests subside at last, on the very bosom of those waves they have so long and cruelly tossed!

Let me hope that the divine power to forgive may yet be accorded me, as a consequence even of the vivid renewal of the remembrance of all that needs forgiveness from me! Would I use that of vengeance indeed, were every species of retaliation placed at my command? And yet it is bitter, very bitter, to swallow this draught to the dregs, and patiently—almost as it were thankfully—set down the cup!

But is it not possible that he who has most injured, may learn in these pages the value of the

heart he has cast from him as a worthless gift? Yet is it in his own nature ever to appreciate mine? Will the exposure of that vile woman's artifices, whom he has preferred to all my love and fidelity——But let me not think of this, or the words of pardon that even now flowed to my lips, will change to curses! Yet if, indeed, I shall at last subdue my soul to their Christian utterance, will it not in recompense be granted to me, by the mercy of heaven, to drop some few unblamed tears over that other mournful destiny associated with mine so disastrously?

Yes! if it may be, enjoy your evil triumph, still more unhappy pair than the twain whose names you have united in that dark serpent convolution of shame and misery! Already the supreme consolation is granted me to prefer my own sorrow and degradation to your cruel and perfidious prosperity and success! Ay, though it may be that in the worldly cynicism and scorn of your depraved hearts, your triumph seems to you verily triumph—your success, success! My misery is indeed great: but it is not so great as to have done evil and to exult in it!

CHAPTER II.

EARLY YEARS.

My first impressions of existence do not present to me that beautiful and alluring rising of the curtain which the years of childhood offer to so many, however stormy and tragical the drama to ensue.

And yet the elements of good fortune seemed accumulated in my favour. My father was the representative of an ancient and illustrious race, descended from the earliest Anglo-Norman conquerors of Wales. He was one of the largest landed proprietors in Glamorganshire: and from an early period of my existence I was looked upon as the heiress of the extensive possessions of the House of Pomeroy-Mauleverer, in conse-

quence of the failure of any farther issue to an union in other respects not a very happy one.

The cause of this unhappiness existed essentially in the characters of my parents, and in some untoward circumstances attending their conjunction.

My father was, perhaps, one of the most irascible men that ever lived; and having been trained from his childhood to prefer his own will and satisfaction to those of all others with whom he came in contact, he had acquired a despotism and a high-handed tyranny of authority in every relation of life which the gentle spirit of my mother was ill calculated to withstand; still less to take a satisfactory part in its wearing and impetuous action. The consequence was, that after a short period of passionate adoration and semi-deification of his wife, my father suddenly discovered that he had chosen his companion for life very ill; that she was a woman without sufficient impulse, spirit, or capacity, for the world of fashion and politics, in which he himself purposed to play a forward part, and had, indeed, already made a brilliant debût: in brief, that she was unworthy of the position to which he had raised her, from the

mediocrity of a country squire's daughter, to the peerage. The neglect and depression of a whole life was the penalty fate exacted from my mother for the temporary exaltation of a mortal to the rank of a goddess.

She was not, however, what she was supposed to be. She was a woman of quiet but deeply tender sensibilities; resigned and tearless, but not for that reason insensible to the bitterness of the draught commended by ill-fortune to her lips; golden and wrought and richly arabesqued as the chalice might be, whence she was thus compelled to drain to the dregs.

And more than to suffer patiently: my poor mother, I fear—nay, I know but too well—had to reproach herself with the ruin of the destiny of another, who truly had not deserved it at her hands; unless enduring love and generosity and self-abnegation, almost without example, could deserve sorrow and humiliation at the hands of any woman their object.

Before my father paid his addresses to her, Helena Ossulston had plighted her faith to a young clergyman of the most amiable manners, and of a gentleness of disposition infinitely more suitable to her own than the strong and impos-

ing characteristics of the man to whom she was finally induced to give her hand. But deceived by the false and cruel maxims, instilled at every pore, in the systems of modern female education, and the rapacious, rank-and-money-worshipping theories of modern society, my poor mother yielded to the seductions of the dazzling illusions offered to her choice, and assumed her crown of thorns in the shape of a baron's coronet.

At the time of my birth, my grandfather, the eighteenth Lord Mauleverer (counting from the restoration of our peerage after the wars of the Roses, in which we took part with the unfortunate house of Lancaster), was still in the enjoyment of the title and estates. He survived, indeed, until I was nearly fifteen years of age —when he might fairly be said to have outlived himself by two or three. During that period he was a bedridden paralytic; towards the latter end of it reduced almost to a state of fatuity and utter helplessness, of mind as well as body.

My grandfather had been one of the handsomest and wittiest men of his time, but also— it cannot be denied—one of its most conspicuous rakes and profligates. He preserved to the last

an unnatural and fixed dislike against his eldest son, whose character and habits were directly the reverse of his own. After the death of a younger and favourite son of his own, and of my two little elder brothers, who all died in succession, he transferred a good portion of this strange antipathy to me, though I was a child at the time, and one who could not have done anything to justify or excite his aversion. But the wrong-hearted old man never forgave me for being what he was wont contemptuously to style "merely a girl." His lamentation and exasperation on the subject of my sex formed a marked feature in the gloomy and fearful phasis of dotage and decay he passed through to the tomb. And I believe he died owing me an irrational grudge on this account; for I remember that his last look at me, as he lay ashy pale and withered on his pillow, with all the aspect of an aged vulture worn to mere beak and bone, was accompanied by one of those hideous twists and contortions, with which he was in the habit of amusing himself, and frightening me, on the occasions when he was pleased to order me into his presence. Willingly I never came; and on this I was carried out of

the fantastic moribund's chamber, screaming with terror in my grandmother's arms. For years after, indeed, that ghastly, sneering, cruel, dying leer, haunted me as a vision of horror and dismay incalculable!

But I fear that even to my own father my sex long continued a cause of the deepest regret and dissatisfaction. He was exceedingly proud of the antiquity of his descent, and earnestly desirous of a direct transmission of the family honors to a remoter posterity. But when my grandfather died, he remained the last surviving male of the great house of the Glamorgan Pomeroys. And the extinction of that proud name, in the person of a female representative, seemed assured, when so many years after my birth and the death of my brothers had elapsed, and left me the only issue of the union. Or was the neglect I experienced from my father, during my early childhood, one of the consequences of the coldness and contempt he took so little pains to dissemble towards my unhappy mother?

There was another potent element of dissension constantly at work in our household—"an Até breathing strife." My grandmother—I say

it in all the charity my own and my mother's needless sufferings from her agency can be supposed to leave—was determined that peace should not dwell under the roof of the son she affected to idolize. Her own temper and happiness had been destroyed by the shameless irregularities and infidelity of her husband; and it seemed impossible for her to contemplate with satisfaction, or, indeed, to permit, where she had power to hinder it, a happier state of things in the matrimonial arrangements of any couple in the world. Now my father, though he appreciated little else in his wife, was aware of her exceeding personal beauty; and while treating her with harshness and disdain on every other score, regarded all other women, physically, with indifference. My grandmother, who was herself very far from being remarkable for personal attraction, at the same time that she would have been merciless in condemnation of any divarication from his duties on the part even of her cherished son, could not complacently allow him to continue to look upon his wife as, at all events, the finest moulded statue into which the life of ambition and passion had *not* been breathed!

To these occasions of discomfort and disunion

existing within the walls of the proud castle of Mauleverer, a very enduring cause for dissatisfaction, and the souring of a disposition not naturally inclined to amenity and tenderness, added the invisible but continual shadow of its presence to the gloom and discontent which even strangers unaccountably felt to pervade that entire stately residence, during most of those early years whose recollections are now returning upon me.

For ages our family had possessed a predominant political interest in the county where our possessions were chiefly situated, and my father had represented it during a series of years. Indeed from the very day when he became of age to take a seat in parliament. He had made a most flattering appearance on the great stage of politics, and had risen with unusual rapidity to an influence and position in his party that seemed to assure him of the most gorgeous rewards his ambition—which was towering—could aspire to. But the Reform agitation was reaching its climax about the same time. My father was a Tory of the old school—a very Coriolanus of aristocratic disdain and unyieldingness. On the other hand, the moving spirit of the age had

breathed powerfully through the depths of social organization even in our remote and secluded province. New interests and new influences pervaded the mass; and after the passing of what we looked upon at Mauleverer as the most shamelessly revolutionary measure of the age since the beheading of Louis XVI., my father was defeated in a contest for the county itself, by a person whom he looked upon with the greatest contempt as a low-born adventurer and interloper, and who had in fact raised himself from indigence to the possession of great wealth and influence in Glamorganshire, by successful mining speculations in the mountains neighbouring on our extensive territorial ownership.

The effect of so mortifying a disappointment on a man of my father's haughty spirit can hardly be estimated at the present day, when class ideas and feelings have been so infinitely modified. He found himself cast out of the noble arena where he had been accustomed to exert all the athletic powers of his intellect, all the commanding qualities of his high and overswaying spirit, amidst the admiration and applause of that immense audience of the entire civilized world which the protagonists of modern British parliamentary

struggle feel they command. Condemned to perpetual exclusion from this scene of excitement and display (for the death of his father could only transfer him to a drowsy Olympus, whence the stir and animation of the scene of real contest and supremacy must be contemplated as a spectacle merely) there were perhaps, after all, some great excuses for those apparently unreasonable, and sometimes even irrational, exhibitions of irritation and cankering discontent, which consumed the activity of a really powerful and leading nature, until nothing remained but the dust and ashes of a wasted and unhappy existence.

I was born, however, before the mutual love, or at least excessive bridegroom fondness of my father for his ill-matched consort, had entirely wasted its strength; before the rapid ebb, which was to leave the reversed Propontis of his passion barren sands, had subsided from all its affluence of waves! He insisted on calling me both by his own name and hers, united in a designation in reality sufficiently novel and musical. Hugh and Helena formed a not inharmonious conjunction—and *Hugh-Helena* I was named.

But even in the earliest years of my childhood I do not remember that I was allowed much resort or familiarity with my nearest and best-loved parent. I was not permitted to draw my first nourishment at the sweet fountains nature provides. A robust Welsh wet nurse was found for me, who, my grandmother declared, would save me, from the inheritance of an hysterical and melancholy temperament, created to be the misery of itself, and of all that came within its dull and moping influence! At the same time the cold sneer was added, my mother could preserve all that wondrous beauty of form which old Lady Mauleverer plainly indicated as the principal or sole recommendation of her daughter-in-law to the continued regard of her noble husband.

If ever there had been any energy of resistance and revolt from the domestic tyranny she had fallen under, in my mother's disposition, it was speedily crushed out. But I have nevertheless heard that she made a long and impassioned stand on this point. She was beaten from it, however, in the issue of the contest; and the defeat she sustained in this (to her) momentous struggle, dispirited her from all future

effort to escape from the cold and level but overwhelming advance of her deplorable destiny: slow waves of mud, but the more certainly engulfing and suffocating in their dull, lifeless flow.

She was allowed as little interference in the management of my early education. My grandmother arrogated the disposal of everything relating to it, in the most despotic and imperious manner, to herself, though she certainly went through the form of issuing her decrees through the lips of her son. My father was chiefly anxious to escape trouble and thought on the subject, and considering that his wife had no capacity to fulfil even the commonest duties of maternity, remitted the decision of everything concerning it to the old baroness. Thus supported my grandmother carried her own stern caprices into effect, on every occasion; and often I cannot now but think, purposely, in direct and unfeeling contradiction to my mother's most earnest wishes and intentions.

Among other circumstances relating to this subject, and which had some effect on my career, I recall certain facts in connexion with the residence at Mauleverer of my first regular gover-

ness, Mademoiselle Feldspar-Wellenhausen, whom it happened, for the poor woman's misfortune, that my mother was the means of introducing into the family.

For some years after the loss of his political position, my father had professed himself, and probably really found himself, unable to endure the mortification of his exclusion from public life, on the scene of its continued animation and absorption for others. He resided therefore a good deal abroad on the continent, during my grandfather's remaining long life; and under pretence of my being an inconvenience, at so early an age, in his restless habits of movement, I was left at home, altogether under the harsh and repressive sway of my grandmother.

I grew at last, however, old enough to require more particular instruction, after having passed through the ordinary rudiments of an English education. In some rare moment of confidence and indulgence on the part of her husband, my mother prevailed to be allowed her selection of a governess for me in the person of a German lady, in whom she had found and cultivated a friendly and congenial spirit.

Mademoiselle Feldspar accompanied my father

and mother home on one of their periodical returns, and was installed, with some considerable signs of doubt and repugnance, on the part of the old baroness, in her office. I became speedily very much attached to her; and so inoffensive and kindly were the manners and whole demeanour of the poor German, that even my grandmother found it very difficult for some time to exhibit any signs of the unreasonable antipathy she nevertheless took to her from the first hour of her arrival.

Mademoiselle Feldspar was not possessed of any of those personal attractions which her jealous experiences rendered so peculiarly obnoxious to my grandmother. She was past the prime of woman's age; was of a darkly sallow complexion, and had somewhat too large a head, suspended in a very ungraceful manner on the spine—almost like a pumpkin on the stem. Her nose, and perhaps all her features, were too bonily defined and protuberant. *Coarse*, old Lord Mauleverer called them (accustomed to admire the plump, rounded outlines of the beauties of the Court of the Regent). But there was something very good and kind, and even lively and attractive, in those small "pig

eyes," as he did not disdain to qualify them, with womanish pettiness of criticism; and in the smile that often played on that certainly too wide and irregular mouth. I was frequently pressed with genuine fondness to that pair of "bran pincushions," as the same authority characterised the German's rather hard and angular configuration; but to me it was as soft as the down on the swan's breast to the cygnet.

I have lain for hours cradled in those kind arms very happily; sometimes indulging in reveries which my governess had not the heart to discourage, being subject to the same, after her own dreamy country fashion; but oftener listening to her curious stores of children's tales and legends, imported, racy of the soil, from the ingenious wonder-land of her native Mother Bunches and Gaffer Greybeard storytellers.

She told these tales as if she believed in them herself—and perhaps was not altogether so incredulous in some departments (the ghost one particularly), as she laboured, at certain philosophical intervals, to persuade me we ought both to be.

Mademoiselle Feldspar-Wellenhausen was a

gentlewoman by birth; and one would have thought that this circumstance would have been a claim on more than ordinary civility in so aristocratic a household as ours. But it was not so. My grandfather found, in all German pretensions to dignity of descent and connexion, an inexhaustible source of sarcastic merriment and allusion. He lost at first only his physical powers of annoyance and distress to the feelings of others; but those of his sharp and unrestrained wit remained long in full activity of mischief and infliction. Old Lady Mauleverer's system of maltreatment was much less demonstrative, but perhaps the more effectual on that account; all too skilfully managed, however, to allow the luckless foreigner any tangible ground of complaint. And thus, for my sake—for she was very much attached to me—Mademoiselle Feldspar suffered a gentle simmering of martyrdom during more than two years, in every form of ladylike insolence and unkindness, that the malignancy of a most polished and inveterate old woman could possibly condense into the period.

But the poor German was vanquished at last, and returned in despair into her own country,—for she did not venture to take another situation

in England. I had then a succession of governesses, of my grandmother's own selection, but who, it appeared, were all as little satisfactory to her as they certainly were to me. One, I remember, had rather red and clumsy fingers, which it displeased old Lord Mauleverer to behold at work on the piano, though she was otherwise a very fine and tasteful performer on the instrument. At last, my grandfather's fearful closing malady occurred; and as we happened at the time to have just dismissed this latter-mentioned official, it was not thought of for a lengthened period to replace her: during which I enjoyed the sweets of a very considerable portion of liberty, and of natural, unchecked development, bodily and mental.

I was fond of books and of solitude,—preferences that could be readily indulged at Mauleverer Castle, which possessed a large and well-chosen library, and was encircled by an extensive domain most sedulously protected from intrusion. The castle itself—inhabited chiefly by a retinue of dom estics who were kept secluded in a remote portion of it—though not one of the greater buildings of its class was, for the principal part of its time, a desert congeries of silent

and untrodden chambers, where one might wander for hours together without much chance of meeting with a breathing soul.

My grandmother continued for many months absolutely absorbed in her attentions to the afflictions of a man who had never at all reciprocated her love, and in the days of his strength and beauty, had treated her with neglect and even ostentatious cruelty. During this period I was supposed to be under the vigilant superintendence and restraint of certain persons appointed to the office, but who indulged me in all my whims and caprices, to as great an excess as I had been previously deprived of every harmless natural freedom and recreation.

In fact, I was left, at a very important period in the formation of a female child's character, almost completely to the sway of my own wayward and eccentric fancies. When the supervision of my grandmother, and of a particularly ill-favoured, elderly waiting-woman, who was her principal attendant and indefatigable spy, was withdrawn almost exclusively into the chamber of suffering, there remained only persons about me who were anxious to gratify my humors in every particular, reasonable and unreasonable.

Neglected as I was, it was well known that I was destined, some day, to be the heiress of great possessions. I believe I was not, at all events, an unamiable child. No doubt the honest-hearted, natural-feeling *commonalty* around Mauleverer, were aware of something harsh and unusual in the treatment of an only child, who seemed to be the orphan of still living parents. It was known, indeed, that my father's disagreements with the old lord made it not easy for them to live together, even under a roof so extensive as that of Mauleverer Castle. But why was his only child and heiress to be abandoned to the melancholy society of two aged, and tyrannous, and unhappy persons, like the couple who presided over the gloomy state of that abode, during the long absences of those to whom my charge legitimately belonged?

The servants in general were devoted to me. My nurse studied my caprices in everything. Our good old housekeeper, Mrs. Yellowley, positively doated on me! And now, my favourite amusement was rambling; and in a most unusual degree, I imagine, in a female child. But I was a very fearless one. Brave, I ought not to style myself, for I apprehended no danger

anywhere, or from any one. In truth, in the midst of that simple and virtuous peasantry, who loved and honoured my race almost too implicitly, and of those solitudes rarely visited by any but the genteel tourist or sightseer, there was little or none to be apprehended.

It is probable, however, that the extent of my wanderings was not suspected. I would not allow myself to be trammelled by the attendance of male servants. My nurse, Megan Jenkins, who was growing old and blind, had no objection to rest at certain appointed spots for me, while I plunged at my pleasure amid the sunny glades and woods and beautifully ornamented grounds of Mauleverer Castle.

With the book of nature open before me, and some choice volume of my favourite authors in my hand, (and these were of a very different class from what would be expected in the selection of a child of my sex and years,) I spent the happiest hours of my life, at the period.

But I must not forget to mention that, on my excursions of this sort, I was always accompanied by one faithful and formidable protector. We had a mastiff dog at Mauleverer, of a prodigious size, called Trusty Gelert by me, after the famous

though unlucky hound of Llewellyn; and he and I were the best of company to each other, on the wildest and farthest of my wanderings.

At a later period, when this passion of my youth for solitude and communion with nature revisited me as a consolation, surely it was a barbarous cruelty of misrepresentation to wrest my habit of frequenting it to the purposes of the atrocious calumnies and conspiracy set to work against me, with a zeal and craft so incalculable!

But this freedom and happiness were to last but a brief period. My grandfather died, and my father and mother returned to Wales, as was fondly hoped and expected by the tenantry and peasants on our estates, to reside.

I never knew the exact particulars of the quarrel that took place shortly afterwards, between old Lady Mauleverer and her favourite son. I believe I was somehow concerned in it. I was unluckily engaged in a particularly long excursion from the castle on the day my parents returned to it. The additional gloom of the presence of a dead body in the person of its late lord, lying in state of crimson pall and plume and escutcheon as it might be, drove and

kept me forth to a much later hour than usual. It was moonrise, indeed, when I returned to the castle, ignorant that my father was already there, and had sent out for me in every direction for some time in vain. I had now an appearance of rude health, and a rusticity of manner that shocked Lord Mauleverer: a man of formally aristocratic taste in all things. And, I must confess, that my great straw-hat, fantastically decorated, Ophelia-wise, with a wreath of woodland flowers, marked by no means a proper sense of the *bien séances*, while that fearful old man's skeleton lay yet ungiven to the dusty jaws of the vaults opening to receive it.

There were probably other matters of discussion between my father and his mother. However, they had an extremely lively one, on the very day of the funeral,—though strictly in private of course,—concerning the wild and undisciplined state in which it seemed I was discovered. My grandmother imputed it all to the obstinacy and rebellious impatience of proper governance, by which I was characterized on all occasions! It was I who had compelled her constantly to part with the most estimable persons whom she had selected to conduct my education!

A few days after the interment of my grandfather, I learned that I was to have a new governess. "And one that would keep me in order, and not allow me to run wild about the country like a savage young '*Injun!*'" said my friend, Mrs. Whortell, old Lady Mauleverer's truly detestable favourite maid, with that peculiar screwed-up smile of hers that always gave her the appearance of a broken-mouthed teapot.

She was to be a French lady also, I heard from another quarter; one of my father's selection this time! Meanwhile, my nurse, Megan Jenkins, was dismissed from her attendance, to my extreme grief, for her supposed dereliction of duty in permitting my unauthorized rambles. And the only piece of qualifying good news that was added to all this evil was, that my grandmother herself had determined to leave the castle, and go and reside in a house of her own in London.

She had done all the mischief she could, doubtless, at Mauleverer; and now that her son, on his new accession of power and supremacy, began to exhibit towards herself the despotism and disdain of all opinions but his own, which she had so constantly fostered in

him towards others, the imperious old woman would not for a moment endure it.

A little circumstance that occurred at the time, however, showed that it was too late to hope for any amelioration of my mother's destiny, from the removal of her who had been so long its evil genius.

CHAPTER III.

SOPHIA SUTCLIFFE.

THE circumstance I allude to presented no feature marking importance more than any other casual event of the period. But it was fraught with momentous consequences to me.

It was shortly after my grandfather's funeral. I had stolen one day into my mother's private apartment—for my visits to her had really very much of the character of some forbidden and unhallowed frequentation. I was sitting at her feet, on a little stool, well pleased, reading to her from a German Mährchen-Buch, which she had brought me from the continent. She was herself an excellent German scholar, loved and

cultivated German literature, and wished to aid me in keeping up the acquaintance in it to which I had been introduced by Mademoiselle Feldspar. For my own part, it was sufficient for me to do anything that pleased my sweet, patient, and angelically beautiful mother, whose uncomplaining serenity of resignation, the instinct of the heart, enabled me, child as I was, to penetrate—or, at least, sorrowfully to suspect, how dark a core of suffering and corrosion was at work in the hidden recesses of her gentle being.

We were thus engaged, when my mother's woman announced, that a young lady, of the name of Sutcliffe, had arrived at the castle in a conveyance from Llandaff; who stated that she had come from a much greater distance, from some place in England, with a letter of recommendation to her ladyship from a particular friend—unhappily, since deceased—which she begged the honour of being allowed to deliver in person.

I was always an observant child, and particularly so of my mother. I saw that her usually pearly pure and delicate complexion, grew of a more deadly pale at the mention of the name. She repeated the word "Deceased!"

with a visible start and shudder! But after a moment's interval, recovering herself with an effort of a kind she was but too accustomed to make on her often rudely-jarred and sensitive nature, she ordered the servant to inform the stranger that she should be happy to see her, and to request her to take the trouble to come to her in the apartment where we were now sitting.

My mother arose immediately after the servant was gone, and took a drink of water from a goblet on her dressing-table, trembling in every limb, and with lips so white and quivering, that I feared something dreadful was about to befall her. I ran to her in terror, and throwing my arms round her neck, kissed her with a passion of love and pity I seldom ventured to exhibit. She returned my caress, hurriedly declaring that nothing was the matter with her to excite alarm. Meanwhile, the person announced, and now, by the additional name of Miss Sophia Sutcliffe, entered the apartment.

Sophia Sutcliffe!—But let me endeavour to be just. Let me describe this woman, to whom I owe all the great misfortunes of my life, if possible, without bitterness. I would fain speak

of her in all charity—nothing exaggerating! Does Sophia Sutcliffe indeed admit of exaggeration, in any of her attributes?

At this period she was probably not quite twenty-two—about seven years older than I was; but her manners were already perfectly formed, and betokened either extraordinary natural self-possession, or a strange familiarity with the world. Without, however, the slightest tinge of forwardness or of unbecoming obtrusion. On the contrary, there was an air of respectful deference, almost approaching to humility, in her address on this occasion. But she could always assume any style that suited best with her purposes of the moment!

Or am I committing the error I apprehended I might be led into at the outset of my narrative? Was this strangely compounded and inexplicable being, of her own nature, and always from the very first, one of the worst of women? Was what she became the faithful development of her radical essence, as the berries of the plants that yield death, are of theirs? Or did the evil constitutions of the world, and an irresistible course of events, seize upon her also, and compel her into that fatal circle

of causes and effects from which there is no retreat? Is she, too, to be reckoned as one of the victims to whom the sphinx of modern society proposes problems only to be solved by the destruction of the soul? For when a soul that has once possessed honor, and purity, and tenderness, and fidelity, has lost them all, is not the life of that soul extinct, if even an immortal essence yet retain the capacity of penal suffering? But the immense, the insatiable enigma, remains: did Sophia ever possess any of these qualities, which are the real living principles of a spiritual existence; or was she all simulation —even from that expression, full of pathos and appeal, that shadowed her countenance so irresistibly the first time I beheld it?

Certainly, there was much that was most amiable and winning: nothing that was treacherous, craving, dissatisfied, envy-gnawed, on the surface of that peculiar visage then! It was one on which, in spite of considerable irregularity of feature, the eye rested with satisfaction; at times, even with admiration and delight, when casting aside her habitual mask of guarded immobility, she permitted the play of the variable and bright-witted mind to coruscate freely

over it. Something stealthy and withheld might perhaps be detected, by a very close observation, in the eye!—leopard-like veiled, soft, but irradiating at times with a strange, inexplicable glow; the look of a caged wild animal, perchance, that has not yet ranged for slaughter.

In person, Sophia was rather above than below the middle stature, and save, for a slight stoop at the neck, her form was doubtless all that the eye of the sensualist seeks in its preliminary rovings. The hands were perhaps a little too large, though well shaped; and I know not how it was, but in Sophia Sutcliffe, a considerable elevation of the nostrils, amounting almost to what is popularly termed "a cocked nose," failed to give her countenance anything of the vulgarity and sauciness it usually communicates to the physiognomies it is attached to.

This figure was garbed in a very simple and decorous travelling dress; effects certainly rather the result of the skill and care bestowed on the arrangement of the costume than of the fineness of the fabrics composing it. Its owner had a letter in her hand, sealed with black, which she presented, after the usual formalities of reception, to my mother.

"My father, madam," she said, with a pathos in her tones that touched some fine vibrations in my young heart, too; "My father has been dead for more than two years; but until now I have had no opportunity of presenting to you this letter, which he commissioned me, in his dying moments, to convey safely to your own hands."

"More than two years!" repeated my mother, with a low, suffocating sob; and taking the letter mechanically, she looked at the direction for several minutes fixedly. "The Honorable Mrs. Pomeroy!" she then repeated, evidently to herself. "The *honorable!*—Poor, poor Edmund!—Excuse me, Miss Sutcliffe," she added, faintly, "I will read your poor father's letter in my private cabinet, where some business will engage me for a few minutes. My daughter, the young lady whom you see, will meanwhile make the daughter of one of her mother's dear — dearest — friends, welcome to Mauleverer Castle. Do you hear me, Hugh-Helena, darling?"

And she left the room with an uneven step.

I was very shy and diffident of strangers in those early days. But it was not easy to con-

tinue one for any length of time with a young person possessed of manners so insinuating and fascinating as those of Sophia Sutcliffe.

A polite but evidently surprised and interested repetition of the peculiar sound of my name, broke the ice between us; and in a few moments I had not only explained how I came in possession of my unusual designation, but found myself engaged, I could not well have told how, in an amusing conversation on the peculiarities of the county we inhabited. Sophia told me she had come on the Mail from London, travelling all night; and the freshness and accuracy of the impressions she had caught up on so rapid a transit, testified to her extraordinary habits of observation.

I liked the very tones of her voice; there was something sweet and strangely affecting and penetrating in their vibration. Her name—at least, of Sophia—pleased me. We were speedily quite confidential in our chat; she had a way of drawing out all she desired to know, without in the least seeming to endeavour to extract intelligence. No doubt she speedily noticed the fact that I made no mention of such an official attached to my person, for she inquired at last,

with undisguised interest in her tones, if I had not a governess?

"No," I replied, with vivacity; "but papa expects one very soon—a nasty Frenchwoman! I hate governesses."

"A French governess, I should say, you will find disagreeable enough, Miss Pomeroy," replied my new friend, smiling. "They are horrid formal, senseless creatures, who will crib, cabin, and confine you, mind and body, if you let them! But I don't see why governesses in general should be such nuisances: I am one!"

"Oh, if papa would but let me have you, and you would promise not to hinder me from doing anything I like, I should be *so* glad!" I answered, naïvely enough. "I think I should like you very much indeed;" I exclaimed, joyfully, until the reflection checked me. "But papa never lets me have anything I like."

"But does he refuse anything to your mother?—to that dear, beautiful lady?—She *is* the most beautiful person I ever saw, excepting only her daughter!" said Sophia, with earnest inquiry in her tones.

"Oh, papa never lets mamma have her own way, either!"

"It is not to be done by beauty, then?" Sophia observed, musingly. "And, besides, you say Lord Mauleverer has entered into an arrangement with a French lady—or else, as I am myself out of a situation at this moment, I should be very happy to find myself placed near a young lady whom I could so much love and admire."

Flattery was one of the master-keys of Sophia Sutcliffe to the human heart. Not merely the vulgar flattery of external or prominent advantages; her adulation was often a response to the most inscrutable and refined heart-longings, and vague, unuttered desires of the soul.

Love and admiration!—To kindle feelings of this kind in any human heart, seemed to me so beautiful and triumphant a fulfilment of existence, that an aim and object which I had not yet, in my joyless and deserted childhood, been able to assign to it, arose at once to allure me on, like an enchanted landscape before some weary pilgrim in a desert.

I had engaged myself quite warmly to do all that I possibly could to secure the services and society of this most desirable *gouvernante*, when my mother re-entered the apartment. She had

evidently been bathing her eyes, but they were still red round the edges with weeping.

"Your father, Miss Sutcliffe," she said to the visitor, in faltering tones. "Your father, it appears, addressed this letter to me only a few hours before he departed; but that is two years ago. How came it I never heard of the sad event, and of your pitiable orphanage, before?"

"We were too poor to put it in the papers. My father died, madam, almost literally of *starvation*, after he was turned out of his little curacy in Dorsetshire, near your father's seat. He differed, unfortunately, but very conscientiously, in his opinions on certain innovations which his rector and the patron of the parish introduced—Puseyite notions, I believe they are called—from them; and, of course, they got another person in his stead, whose views coincided with their own. I was very desirous to execute his dying wish; which was, that I should deliver this paper into your own hands, and with my own. But I was a mere schoolgirl at the time—and not at liberty to dispose of my time, if I had been possessed of other needful facilities for making my way to your ladyship's presence. Even when I managed to get myself placed on

the continent, with a view to complete my education as a governess, I had never the good fortune to be in any of the cities visited by yourself and Mr. Pomeroy."

"Of starvation!" murmured Lady Mauleverer.

"O, madam! there is nothing surprising in the starvation of a curate of the establishment, who teaches Latin and Greek for a subsistence, and is in bad health!" replied Miss Sutcliffe; adding, with strange hilarity, "And his daughter is not unlikely to follow his example in that respect: it would not be easy in any other!"

"You were brought up at a school for the destitute children of the clergy, I believe?" faltered my mother, glancing waveringly at her letter.

"Yes, madam; and I can produce the best testimonials to my diligence and good behaviour while in the asylum."

"And you went on the continent after——"

"After my father's death, Lady Mauleverer, at my own earnest desire, the society procured me a situation as nursery governess in a family of high distinction going abroad. I can produce also the kindest certificates from that noble

family. But I was compelled, in order to acquire the necessary accomplishments, to withdraw from their service when they returned to England; and now—now I find it difficult to procure a situation in this country without more powerful recommendations than I retain."

It seems to me that I remember a kind of blush—and yet it was a paleness, too, like that of wind-fanned red embers—steal over Sophia Sutcliffe's visage, as she made this explanation.

"Nothing that is in my power shall be wanting to forward your views. I have not forgotten that your father was the faithfullest, the most noble-hearted of friends!" my mother replied. "My daughter, indeed, requires a governess at this very moment," she continued, with hesitation; "and if you possess the accomplishments you state—but I fear I have not sufficient influence—I mean my lord is, I am afraid, irrevocably engaged to a French lady before your arrival."

Sophia gave her peculiar glance at my mother. "I am very willing to submit to his lordship's judgment as to my acquirements; but is it really possible that your ladyship has not the

absolute disposal in all that relates to the education of this very young lady?"

"Miss Sutcliffe," said my mother, eluding the question, but colouring as she did so, "I am afraid your name would be against you here!"

"My name!—pardon the repetition," exclaimed the candidate for my governesship, with an appearance of great interest and surprise. "But what can my name have to do in the matter? I am aware that Lord Mauleverer is stated to be a nobleman of the highest aristocracy of feeling, as well as of rank; but he would not surely require a patent of nobility with the testimonials of talent in a governess for his daughter? Besides," she added, with increasing eagerness, "my name is no essential part of me: you can give me any other you think more suitable, madam!"

"It is your recommendation to me—but to my lord it has, perhaps, some unpleasing associations; once, at all events, it had! But it would be impossible for me to be a party in any species of deception of the kind," my mother said, rather coldly; for her nature was abso-

lutely incapable of any sort of guile, and abhorred it in others.

"Mamma! I will have no other governess than Miss Sutcliffe!" I exclaimed, with the warmth I usually put into matters of feeling.

"We will do all we can, my child," replied my mother; "but you know that is not much! At any rate, Miss Sutcliffe, you may depend on me for a reference, or anything of that sort you may require. I have very little," she added, melting into one of those showers that so often fell from her gentle eyes, "but sympathy to offer to the necessities of my best-loved friends, or your father would not—should not—have died—as you say—almost of starvation!"

And she wept long and dismally on the word.

But it turned out as my poor, slighted, powerless mother expected. Though Sophia Sutcliffe, on being questioned—one might say examined—by her, was ascertained to possess very unusual acquirements to fit her for the office she aspired to fill, my father would not hear of his plans, with regard to the French governess, being put aside. He had accepted her from the recommendation of a

princess of the exiled elder Bourbon branch. Was he to add the indignity of declining such a mark of interest on her part, to her Royal Highness's discomforts? And for the sake of a stray "*charity brat* of a governess" whom my mother's utter want of judgment had, doubtless, purposely raised up in opposition to his own declared intentions and wishes? My father chose to seem entirely ignorant or forgetful of any particular reason my mother might have to extend her protection to the orphan of the Reverend Edmund Sutcliffe. And not satisfied with this plain declaration of his will, he desired Lady Mauleverer to lose no time in providing elsewhere for her protégée.

Equally in vain did my mother and I strive to call Lord Mauleverer's favourable notice to the many valuable talents of our candidate. He would not deign to form any judgment on the subject—even to see or hear her. No one but a Parisian could teach a pure French accent! He was about to return to the continent—my father was quite infatuated with Baden at this time—and could not leave such an ungovernable, headstrong girl as his daughter in the charge of a person only a few years older than herself. In

short, the decree had gone forth, and nothing could alter it.

Finding all our entreaties in vain—for even I presumed to join in them, and achieved a sharp rebuke in consequence—and having, indeed, as I afterwards learned, received peremptory orders to that effect—my mother proceeded to do the best she could for her defeated candidate in another direction. She inserted an advertisement for her in a London fashionable paper, as a governess, allowing references to be made to herself.

Curiously enough, a family in the county we resided in were at the time in want of a governess; and, as they were wealthy, offered a very handsome salary, and expressed themselves perfectly satisfied with my mother's guarantee for the respectability and attainments of Miss Sutcliffe, an arrangement was concluded.

Meanwhile, Sophia had resided several weeks at Mauleverer; and whether it was the natural suddenness and warmth of my feelings, or the pains she took to ingratiate herself with me, I conceived an attachment for her which all her subsequent ingratitude and wickedness have

scarcely yet obliterated from my heart. Nevertheless, she was compelled to depart, and under circumstances that allowed us very little hope of meeting again. The Suetts—that was the name of the family with whom she had engaged herself—resided at a considerable distance from Mauleverer. They did not move in my father's very exclusive circle of society in the county, and were, besides, persons whom, for peculiar reasons, he held in dislike. My mother herself, I remember, was surprised that Mrs. Suett should desire to receive an inmate from her recommendation, and the whole affair was transacted by letter.

Sophia and I parted with seemingly mutual regret; and I did not see her again for a period of more than a year. In this interval, my father and mother returned to the continent—my grandmother having already removed, very discontentedly, to London. I was left, as it appeared, for the purpose of my education at Mauleverer. The French governess, to whom the task was to be confided, duly made her appearance, and was formally installed at the castle.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BLACK RAINBOW.

MADAME LE CRAMPON was not a person likely to conciliate the affection of a child of my character. Not that she was disagreeable to the eye. Her face, it is true, was a very flat oval, there being little forehead over her eyebrows—and though she assured me this was a characteristic of the Grecian *beau idéal*, I never admired it. Her complexion was perfectly clear, but of a red brick hue, and absolutely unchangeable. She had hard, bullace eyes, that could look at you for hours without any variation of expression, or rather of *expressionlessness*. She was of good figure, though of rather inferior stature, and she dressed admirably. Yet on the whole she

impressed me with a thorough sense of dislike and repugnance from the very first.

I was left in the custody of this lady, under decree that I was to obey her as implicitly as my grandmamma herself, whose orders all my supposed wilfulness had certainly very rarely given me courage to disobey. It was not a pleasing association of ideas. Madame proceeded too abruptly also in assuming those reins of authority which had been fluttering for so many months loose as ribands on my neck. She scarcely examined me five minutes before she pronounced that I was inconceivably ignorant, and that I must make up for lost time by a *veritable imprisonment of application*. That was her expression.

When I confessed that I could read and even speak German, but did not know a word of French, her astonishment was apparently boundless! She spoke English herself wonderfully ill, but was not at all aware of the fact. I own I laughed to her face when she exclaimed: "Mon Dieu! what madness! Even your *prononciation insulaire vitiates* herself by the *accent* of this *terrible langue*, which can only intonate itself properly by a horse when he is to cough

over a manger of beanstraw, or a *cochon* chewing himself uncooked *pommes de terre!*"

It was decided that I was to unlearn all that I knew. Particularly, I was to cast into oblivion the little inkling I had acquired in German literature. It was *totalement* without value in all respect! of the most declared *mauvais goût*: no one ever thought to learn it in the time of the Grand Monarque! On the other hand, I was to learn to become a person of this world; to cease to cherish the most romantic notions: to study the obedience I owed to the best of fathers. Above all, I was to abandon a ridiculous attachment to solitude, and to books and studies altogether unfitted to the female capacity and business in existence. Finally, I was to study the laws of morality in their *vrais principes*, in the admirable Télémaque of Monseigneur l'Archevêque de Fénélon—and acquire a perfect knowledge of the French language! The French language contained the models of taste; all the *classiques* worthy of perusal. Monsieur Racine and the Grand Corneille to wit! Nothing, Madame admitted, in French literature was possible to be perused by a young girl—was worth the perusal

of any age or class—after the exile of the best and most unfortunate of kings, Charles Dix.

Good heaven! if, as was avowedly the object, I was to be educated up to the mark of Parisian civilization, as understood in the faubourg St. Germain, what a Chinese system of bandages it must be!

I was not to have a natural idea, a natural movement. I was to consider myself a being entirely destitute of feelings, passions, even of inclinations—until I was *married!* This happy event would come to pass as soon as I should show myself worthy of *liberty*—I was now, a girl of fifteen years scarcely, continually assured; but entirely at the discretion and pleasure of my parents, and most absolutely of my distinguished and *illustre père*. It was continually reiterated that he alone had sufficient *lumières* and experience to choose for me rightly in the grand event of my life. Madame ma mère was the best of women, Madame Le Crampon was informed and believed; *mais après tout*, had not the necessary *renseignmens* and science of the world possessed by my father! She was perhaps something of an *idéologiste*—apt to be led away by fancies and theories exceedingly beautiful and

Arcadian in themselves—but ridiculous for practical use, *à faire pleurer de rire.*

A good deal of this gibberish was unintelligible to me at the time. But, Madame Le Crampon! your pupil had tasted the joys of liberty, and was freeborn in every impatient fibre of her being! From the very first interview a nerve-straining struggle was set on foot between me and my Parisian tamer.

This Frenchwoman did me incalculable mischief. She gave me a good Parisian accent, it is true; but what besides? If in my character there has been remarked a degree of obstinacy and mistaken adherence to my own notions; if my impatience of restraint has at times amounted to a rash and perilous defiance of opinion; if my sensibilities and their natural displays have at the same time been taught more habitually to confine and choke themselves in my heart, until the accumulated soul-damp could only burst in explosions that were catastrophes: if, in short, I am the wayward, headstrong, brooding, uncertain creature I have been represented by some; I owe it in most part to the pernicious system this Frenchwoman put in force against me during the months of that harmful year of her sway.

She could not conquer me. But she could pervert all that was most excellent in my disposition—bring into exercise the wily and combative energies of a nature originally possessing little of either evil quality; and mature them by constant requisition in struggle. Contempt, impatient revolt, were fostered in my soul, and combined in a baneful league, though under guidance of a good instinct that urged me to repel to the last the Frenchwoman's efforts to bring me under the yoke of her obsolete and truly immoral maxims of education.

Madame Le Crampon thought herself in the right, I have no doubt, as an inquisitor might in former days; or a Thug in our own, strangling on religious principles.

Madame Le Crampon did not in the least comprehend me, or wish to comprehend me. I was so much marble placed in her hands, to be hewn to a particular form—and that form, in her opinion, the ideal of perfection. My resistance—the countergrain I opposed—were only what was to be expected from the material: hard, but admitting of a fine polish, she often graciously encouraged me to believe. Furnished with full powers of the chisel and hammer, she

worked away at me, I suppose, with much of the tranquil enjoyment of a statuary in the strokes that disperse the obstructing mass from his preconceived idea.

I believe she found me rather difficult to *chisel out*, nevertheless. But I was left to my own unaided resources in the struggle. My father paid only one flying visit to Mauleverer that year—alone—for though I was not informed of it, my mother was suffering under a serious and lasting attack of illness, which compelled my father to remove from his beloved Baden to winter at Nice. I found, however, he paid no attention to the detail of grievances I made to him. He was satisfied with my progress in French and *deportment*—my governess having taught me to glide in and out of a room, and curtsy, like a statue moved by invisible springs—and my grandmother had long persuaded him that I was a girl of an audacious, mutinous disposition, who required the strongest coercive measures to bring her into any kind of decent subordination. Measures of severity nevertheless always had a directly contrary effect to that of obtaining submission from me.

My father, I must say, had strictly forbidden

that any kind of personal chastisement should ever be inflicted on me. But my French governess herself, though of the *ancien régime* in so many other respects, had no notion of inflicting corporeal severities—of a kind to come under observation! Her plan was *solitary confinement*. Whenever my tasks were not done to her satisfaction, or, which I own, happened not so very unfrequently, when I refused to do them at all (sometimes my dislike of the teacher vented itself in an absolute resolution not to study her language), she used to lock me up in our school room, on a regimen of bread and water, until I submitted.

This I confess to have occasionally held out against for whole days together. Once indeed I protracted my resistance to learning by *head* (for I never put any heart in the matter) a long speech in the Polyeucte of Corneille, which Madame Le Crampon declared to be a miracle of eloquence—and which proved our pretended William Shakespeare the most barbarous of Goths—for an entire week.

The truth is, I had discovered a means of consolation in my chastisement itself; and whenever I desired to give myself a holiday, it was

thus I took it. I selected from the library such books as I desired to read, concealed them in some portion of the chamber devoted to our instructions, announced my revolt, received my sentence—and the moment I was left alone, commenced the delicious perusal of the Arabian Nights, or of some wild fanciful ballad of Schiller, or romance of Ludwig Tieck!

The windows of my chamber of captivity, moreover, commanded a glorious spectacle. They opened on some low turreted leads that formed the roof of a circular tower in the castle. It was easy for me, a strong, resolute girl of my age, to drop myself from an opened casement on these leads. Once there, wherever I turned, nature spread a volume of endless pages of unwritten romance before me. The tossing green manes of the woods, the white rushing of the rapid rocky river below my gaze; the ever-changing realms of the clouds and sunbeams, over my head —presented to me untravelled worlds of bright conjecture. Above all, a vague unutterable longing ever drew my eyes towards the recesses of those shadowy hills, on which the rainbows often seemed to rest their resplendent feet!

I was endowed with an ardent and shaping

imagination. My German governess's legends, and my own course of romantic perusals, had furnished it with captivating materials. How could I pass the time more to my liking, which I was determined at seasons should elapse, than in peopling the realm beneath my gaze with the fantastic mythology thus placed at my disposal?

My body might remain in captivity; but that which was infinitely more *me* was dancing with the fairies deep down in those green valleys, or winding itself upward with the skylark into the clear blue, where we both became as diamond specks in the firmament, and where certainly Madame Le Crampon could not follow us!

Moreover, those haunted hills had a fascination for me apart from romantic fancies, and the more stirring associations of the times of struggle and warfare between the two races which now peacefully possessed the land together. My nurse, Megan Jenkins, had taken care that I should not be left in ignorance on points of legendary history; and though confessedly the good old Welshwoman and her Anglo-Norman nurseling should have been on opposite sides of the question, we certainly very rarely were, when deeds of heroism, love, or sorrow formed the

subject of the ballad. For though obliged to translate her mountain poetry for my use, prose-ballads at all events they remained.—But I have said that the Glamorgan highlands had still another attraction for me besides all that these associations could present. I knew, though I had no precise notion of the locality, that the family Sophia Sutcliffe had gone governess in, resided among the hills. They were mining proprietors.

I cannot, however, account for the attraction this young person continued to exercise over my mind and heart, even after so considerable a period as a year and two or three months. Had she cast a spell upon me from the very first? We had been but the acquaintances of a very few weeks, and yet I missed her, for so long a time after her departure, in a thousand different ways. She had indeed a power of fascination when she chose to exert it! She suited me, I may say, magnetically! The very touch of her fingers when she smoothed my often wildly flowing hair, laughing at its disordered freedom, traversed my frame with a thrill of pleasure. Her lively talk—the vivid glimpses of unknown worlds of thought and feeling and existence it

afforded me—gave an indescribable movement, and vague but marching gaiety to my ideas—like the distant music of a military band. She suited me in every form—and in every form I missed her.

I think, however, she could have had but little influence on the strange outbreak my long fermenting indignation and spirit of self-assertion at last vented themselves in! The impression, however marked, she had left, must have been well nigh worn out. I should say I had almost forgotten Sophia Sutcliffe at the time when it was destined my own act should again place me under her singular influence.

Matters continued as I have described, for a very considerable period, externally unchanged. My tyrantess condemned me to solitude—and the moment she left me to it I found myself in a gorgeous palace of the fancy, where, as in the story of the Third Blind Calender, were an infinitude of doors opening into the most magnificent apartments; gardens of musk and ambergris; orchards of unknown but dazzling fruit; and where, above all, there was one chamber in which the winged and silver-shod mys-

terious steed stood ready saddled and bridled for an excursion, however giddy and wild, into the boundless empyrean of imagination. Supported by this secret power of delightful abstraction, I not unfrequently achieved the brilliant emotion of victory by the very perseverance of my sedition! My jaileress herself would grow weary and alarmed at its length. She would release me unconditionally, and I came forth a conqueror!

Often a very faint and exhausted one, certainly. I generally made it a point of honor not to touch the unrelishing food placed in my reach. I wished to prove—scarcely understanding my own drift—that I was not to be subdued by physical necessities, however craving.

I must confess, however, that my maid—Marianne Lloyd—found out a very unmagnanimous means of bringing me occasionally to submission. She persuaded me that these long recesses pleased Madame Le Crampon instead of disconcerting her; and that she enjoyed her leisure exceedingly, dedicating it to the manufacture of a new head-dress, or otherwise to the adornment of her person. At times, I was in the mood—dearly as I oved my own private dedication—to

deprive my controller of the satisfactory interval my imprisonment allowed her.

But I must declare that not unfrequently my chief objection to a surrender lay in the fact—that I should be compelled to undergo one of Madame Le Crampon's *kisses of reconciliation* as a consequence. There was nothing I hated more than a kiss from my Parisienne. Her thin but humid lips seemed always to leave a sliminess on my cheek—I never suffered her to touch my lips if I was at all aware of the operation intended! Reversely, she had a great fancy to kiss me.

I could do nothing decently well, or reasonably obedient, for which she would not kiss me. I heard her once inform a countryman of her own, who strayed by some unaccountable chance into Wales, was called a Count, and seemed to me a withered monkey—that to kiss me refreshed her! It did not me at all.

Yet I am far from pretending that all this mixture of romance and reality furnishes a justification for the extraordinary result it at last produced! An act of madness indeed, had I not been brought up so profoundly ignorant of what was reasonable.

The tyranny of Madame Le Crampon grew daily more insupportable to me. I was a steed of fiery race, whose rider goads it with the spur while he holds it in at the mouth, till blood and foam mingle on the curb.

Madame Le Crampon's system (for she had a system: nothing absolutely hard, senseless, and bowelless can be carried out without a system!) united the goad and martingale in the most remorseless perfection. Was I inclined to advance, on any road, even of her own selection, she checked me. To learn quickly was to learn superficially. To take a delight in any thing I was doing was a certain sign it ought not to be done! My hours were parcelled out to me in the most tedious and minute subdivision. No impulse, no movement, out of certain narrowly chalked limits, was to allowed—while at the same time there mostly seemed no other reason for her own ossifications of routine but a senseless adherence to certain laid-down formulas she had herself received without question, and put in execution as oracles of divine wisdom.

Whereas my respect for my teacher diminished through the very instruction she thrust upon me. The most stereotyped of French ideas and

expressions yet contain in them the elements of a sarcastic enlightenment, which I was not long in applying to Madame Le Crampon's own character and ideas. I perceived that she was a mere unintelligent machine of educational theories, whose letter she administered, but whose spirit had long since departed. I understood her finally to be a woman of the narrowest understanding, as well as worldly-heartedness, and paltry views of self-elevation: and wo betide that tyranny which is despised as well as hated!

My dislike and contempt for my governess stood at last nearly balanced: a longing to throw off a yoke I contemned, and even a desire of revenge, took possession of my once sweet-blooded and gentle nature. Add to these my childish love of freedom, fostered by some indulgence, and that vague but powerful hope for happiness in change, which humanity has ever cherished since its exile upon the earth!

And now this latter illusion took hold of my wild fancy in the shape of a visible promise, if only I could penetrate into the recesses of those nigh, but unexplored and secret hills, that lay ever gleaming with their golden-purple summits along the bright lines of the sunset, and seemed

to offer an attainable goal of refuge and reali
romance.

These notions worked together, fermen
finally took definite aim and significance. W
was it to me to be the child of a great hous
an heiress? Nothing! The meaning of th
fine words, practically interpreted, was to
only neglect, solitude, a wearisome routine
worthless labours, tending apparently to
result. In my rambles I had observed
way of life among the cottagers' children
the simple and contented peasantry aro
Mauleverer. They seemed to enjoy perpe
air and sunshine. Their cheeks were ruc
I had often partaken of their fare of rye-br
and buttermilk, and relished it better than
own formal repasts. They played about
doors of their homes, one with another,
acquired a language that seemed more diffi
than French or German, under the tutorage
the rustling trees and warbling brooks alone.

Nobody cared for me for whom I needed
care. So I thought. My mother had b
now so long absent that she seemed to h
deserted me too. The old housekeeper,
older bailiff, the woodmen, the gamekeep

the dairy-maids, had all once cherished me, it is true. But they now rarely saw me. I was not suffered to resort to such low company! Besides, I thought they would rejoice in so much good fortune happening to me, as an escape effected from the oppression of the foreign intruder, whom I knew they likewise secretly disliked.

I cannot deny I anticipated an ample measure of revenge on my tyrantess in the evasion from her authority I now seriously planned. I knew that in the absence of my parents, the French governess was held responsible in every respect for my safety and well-being. I had myself heard my father declare so to her, with a ring of menace in his stern tones.

I came to the conclusion that I should certainly find refuge and security in those solitary hills, whither my fancy had so often wandered. Did not the shy and fugitive rainbows seem to rest on them in delight? And a remarkable one that was visible about the time I now allude to carried my feverish exaltation to the highest pitch!

Not of a very tempting sort to some, perhaps. It was one of those rare and curious phenomena

sometimes visible in mountainous elevations—a Black Rainbow. So the peasants of my native province style such in their picturesque dialect. But it ought rather to be called a White Rainbow. On nights of mist and moonlight a semicircle of milky radiance expands from hill to hill, deepening from an inner arch of pale brightness, sometimes through wan and ghastly shades of colour, into the darkness of the sky. The spectacle of a phenomenon of this sort late one autumn evening, recalled the old childish longings and impulses to my heart. But it dismayed and amazed Madame Le Crampon, and rendered her more than usually fretful and exacting. She did not approve of departures from routine in anything. I believe she would have liked all the pinks in the world to be streaked after one pattern, and that pattern taken from the bandbox of a Parisian *modiste!*

She retired from the unnatural spectacle, very much disposed to call nature to account for her vagaries. And, in spite of my entreaties, and even tears of vexation, she compelled me to follow her into an apartment where the shutters were carefully closed, to exclude the annoying

It vexed—it humbled me even inexpressibly to be obliged to share the foolish fears of my governess—or, at least, to seclude myself with her from that splendid show, so freely offered by the great manageress, on the stage of heaven itself!

I sat silent all the rest of the evening, and was reproached with sullenness. I answered, no doubt, petulantly, and, as a punishment, was assigned a double portion of one of those boasted French *classiques*, to be learned by heart—a series of petrified common-places entitled "Spring!" I at once declared that happen what might, I never would destroy my own recollections of the real and beautiful *printemps* of nature by stuffing my head with a French Sèvres-ware imitation! There was no such goddess as Flora, I told madame fiercely, remaining in the world; and that shepherds and shepherdesses did not go about with ribands on their crooks, declaring what sacrifices they intended to offer to Pan and the nymphs, or singing at one another for prizes of carved beechen bowls! It was the revolt of romanticism against classicism, commencing, as in the original case, in utter weariness; and I conducted mine with as little tem-

per and discretion as the argument has been elsewhere insisted on.

Madame Le Crampon was fairly horrified. An evil spirit had entered into me, she declared. But she would exorcise it. I was to be confined until I had signified my recantation of such absurd, such revolutionary notions, by writing an eulogium, in the *sincerest* and *best* spirit of the *printemps* of—Monsieur Lunettes' *des Anciens*, let us style the bard, to avoid offence. Confined, but not in any agreeable, airy apartment of study, where, perhaps, I amused myself like the Baron Trenck, of whose adventures I was so fond, in cultivating an intimacy with spiders and mice! I should be shut up in my governess's own room, where, she informed me, with a malicious smile, she should be very glad of my company while she turned an old silk gown into a new one good enough to wear in that *pays désolé des Galles*.

Madame Le Crampon had chosen, of her own motion, an apartment exactly suited to the narrow and stifling characteristics of her mind. Numerous chambers of handsome size had been placed at her disposal; but she preferred a very little suite, looking on the principal castle

walk. She hardly ever permitted her windows to be opened; so that the prospect of a *tête-à-tête* with her, in her bedchamber, for a whole day (I knew it would take me a whole day to accomplish my task), occurred to me as more insupportable than to spend one in a dungeon with a spider, or even a toad—an animal more particularly my aversion.

I had seemingly, however, no resource but submission. To adopt my usual policy of passive resistance, under the circumstances, would only be to prolong my own misery. I took a resolve in silence, while I was eating my bread and milk that night under my governess's bleak, malicious eyes, that confessed her enjoyment and triumph in the power she abused. In the fashion of Sancho's physician, she had ordered away, as deleterious to my health, but in reality to show her despotism of authority, a comb of new honey Mrs. Yellowley had ventured to insinuate on my little supper-tray. I was very fond of honey—and this drop of bitterness made the cup overflow.

I went to bed. To judge from my external composure, not mutinously at war with the decree pronounced. I took my evening *kiss*

de rigueur from Madame with some little e
shrinking perhaps; but what a master tea
of dissimulation is tyranny! I allowed m
to be undressed by my maid; carefully, tho
with no obvious heedfulness, watching where
different articles of my raiment were besto
I lay down, and even feigned to fall very
and soundly asleep; so that when my gover
looked in at me, as she always did before g
to rest herself, as if to make sure of her cap
—she should be satisfied all was right.
usually shaded her lamp, not to waken me,
took but a careless and perfunctory survey.
it was well for me on this occasion that it wa
or my agitation might have awakened suspi

I did not sleep a single wink that ni
and the first glimpse of daybreak saw me c
pletely attired, in readiness for my proje
flight into the world.

Marianne Lloyd slept in the ante roon
mine; but she was a heavy sleeper; and I
through her chamber on tiptoe without dist
ing her.

I knew that as soon as it was daylight
milkers and dairymen went a field. I k
how to reach unobservedly the backstair

which they passed from their apartment, in the general offices, into the stableyards. Thence it was easy to reach the open country—at least to one not liable to be brought to question and halt on the way.

I was; and therefore I had decided to take rather a liberty with the upper garments of one of the girls belonging to the menial part of my father's establishment, whose figure I knew resembled my own. I was very well aware where Sukey Jenkins, my foster-sister, kept her scarlet Sunday cloak, and smart round Welsh hat, the favourite garb of our Glamorgan female peasantry. But I made my way to her little chamber, and possessed myself of the articles. I had the honesty to leave her all the little pocket-money I owned, with a *written promise* that I would send enough to replace the value of the dress completely, as soon as I could earn it by work at some farmer's!

I arrayed myself with indescribable satisfaction in these appropriated garments. I even recollect surveying the result, with a flattering estimate of my own good looks, in a little cracked mirror Sukey kept over her washstand —no doubt for the same purpose.

It was so early that only our dairy women and some grooms, busied in the stables at their work, were astir. I passed quite unobserved out of the immediate enclosures of the house; and with a sensation of bounding joy and triumph no wine but liberty ever intoxicated the human heart withal, I found myself in the open domain of Mauleverer Park.

It was one of the finest mornings that ever dawned. The rising sun filled the whole sky with a lovely rosy flush. The atmosphere was deliciously fresh and serene. The birds sang on every bough. It was the beginning of the world with me, when God looked over his entire creation, and all was good!

I bent my steps at once in the direction of the hills. I had formed my notable plan decisively. Up among those high barriers, I had often heard my nurse say, the people were far better, kinder, more hospitable than in the valleys we lived among. They were shepherds and cowherds; and sheep and cows I was very fond of. They inhabited pretty, moss-covered huts, whence those blue plumes of smoke were so often visible, curling gracefully on the wind as the feathers on the helm of a knight of the olden

time. My nurse was herself a hill woman; and with all the comforts of her position at Mauleverer, always looked back to her youthful habits with regret.

Among these good people I felt assured I should be happy. The distance of their abodes was a strong recommendation,—it would secure me from recapture. Who would suspect the daughter of the owner of a castle in the disguise of a shepherd-girl? Thus I reasoned. Madame Le Crampon, who was always vaunting the advantages of wealth and position to which I was born, would never dream of my purpose. —Will the reader? It certainly was to offer myself as a servant-girl to attend on those same friendly and tranquil-looking cows and sheep, whose composed demeanour had always suggested to me a pleasing contrast with my own disturbed and fretful existence!

In particular, I was allured with the prospect of becoming one, as it were, of a contented family of the latter fleecy innocents. It semeed to me so delightful a way of passing the time, browsing among the sweet heather, or reclining on the sunny slopes of the hills, listening, in all

comfort and repose, to the musical tinkle o
chieftain's bell! Tempest or butcher neve
their menacing shadows on my pastoral
scapes.

CHAPTER IV.

PLAS NEWYDD.

I KEPT on the lower bank of the great avenue that traverses Mauleverer Park, as soon as I found myself fairly out of the castle enclosures. This is a very steep one—to the left as you leave the mansion. A rapid stream flows at the bottom, where passers along are screened from observation by clumps of ancient and extraordinarily lofty trees. On I went — but I had not gone far on this covered way before I suddenly bethought me how I had left Trusty Gelert behind!

Trusty Gelert, who, by far the greater portion of his time, was also a moody captive; chained near a comfortable hutch, it is true, but one

which he detested, as I did the apartment of Madame, and which he never entered without a growl of protest.

And besides his claims as an old friend and fellow-sufferer, what a most desirable companion and counsellor would he not be on such an adventure as that I was bound on! It never occurred to my inexperience what a strange figure a little serving-wench would cut, who offered her drudgery in conjunction with the services of a mastiff of the largest size, whose very appearance struck terror—fit only to ornament the courtyard of a stately mansion.

After a short demur, I resolved to return and set my four-footed friend at liberty with myself, at all risks. If I was recognised, it was not so unusual with me to set Gelert loose from his chain, though he was never permitted by Madame Le Crampon to accompany us on our walks. He dirtied my dresses with his clumsy paws, she would say—and was besides a very dangerous, ungovernable *monstre!* Indeed, once it was as much as I could do to prevent him from leaping upon her, and doing her some memorable mischief, on an occasion when she presumed to give me rather a rough haul, to my customary

imprisonment at her side, for running myself out of breath with him.

Trusty Gelert's residence was a few yards from the lodge at the gate into the park from the castle yard, under a group of glittering green birches that shaded it. It was so early that even the active inmates of the lodge were not yet astir. And though the faithful creature hailed my approach by springing the whole length of his chain, and uttering his deep bay of welcome, no one appeared to be disturbed. After skulking and listening for a few minutes under the trees, I ventured to emerge. A moment rid Gelert not only of his chain, but of his collar; it might recal unpleasant associations, I thought, and had, besides, my father's name upon it.

The joy of Trusty Gelert fully equalled my own when, setting forth at a rapid pace, he found we were making our way into Mauleverer woods. Well remembered he our happy days in their green solitudes before either of us saw the ill-omened visage of her from whom we were now fleeing, as if a-trip on the breezy morning air!

It was perhaps a good inspiration of my

guardian angel that prompted me to seek t
escort of this powerful and attached frie
Several times that eventful day we passed w
strollers, in out-of-the-way places, whose re
contre might otherwise have been perilous
the wandering heiress of Mauleverer. In p
ticular, I remember, a black sailor came up
us in a desert, heathy place, who glared strang
at us as we passed, and after us. But Gel
also turned his formidable muzzle at the sa
moment, and the fellow kept on his way.
that same day a black tramp of this very
scription committed a brutal robbery and mur
in a lonely farmhouse near Chapel Mart
Farther on we passed an encampment of gi
tinkers, who turned out unanimously to stare
us. A gleaming-eyed old hag detached hers
from the group, and insisted on telling me
fortune. But Gelert growled, and she and
allies retired, as if Una and her faithful lion h
crossed their thievish settlement.

Thanks, Trusty Gelert! for thy unfe
loyalty and protection on that wild journe
my rough but most gentle chevalier, "ten
and true" as the ancient Douglas of the Hea
But for one sorrowful association, thy mem

would be among my few unalloyed reminiscences.

We had a joyous journey of it for the first few hours that day, Trusty Gelert! Neither of us knew well whither we were going, but both were satisfied that it was all right with us since we were together, and abroad under the open blue and sunshine, enjoying the full use of our limbs and faculties, freed from all collars and chains—trending our way the while vaguely towards some unknown, but we nothing doubted, pleasant bourne.

We reached the brow of a hill in a gradual ascent from the water course, and I remember looking back with a feeling of inexpressible exultation at my deserted home.

Mauleverer Castle was a building of great antiquity, and, in the days of lance and crossbow, was probaby rated one of considerable strength. Like most of the border castles of Wales, built to repress the incursions of semi-barbarous tribes, it had been of great extent and solidity, though not equal, in magnificence, to the midland and southern fortified mansions of England. It now consisted chiefly of the original central mass, crowned by a battlement, and flanked by

five or six semicircular towers adhering to t
main pile. The rest had been destroyed in t
Civil Wars, but the ruins had been carefu
cleared away. Formerly a moat surrounded t
castle; now this had been filled up and plant
in terraces as a garden. We displayed our wea
and state chiefly in the very beautiful ornamen
grounds of the residence, and in the extent
the walled park and chase beyond them.

In the direction I now looked spread accor
ingly a most rich and diversified expanse
park scenery, including some fine woods, and
broad, winding, rocky river. Beyond was
extensive landscape of flat, but cultivated a
smiling pastoral country stretching to the sh
of the sea. Its blue, dazzling line was clea
visible to my young eyes; and the white gl
of sails in the sunshine gliding along it in
soundless panorama. But what interested m
chiefly in the survey was the opportunity it ga
me to seek out the narrow windows Madam
Le Crampon so seldom suffered to be open
and amuse myself by figuring her lying purr
up, fast asleep, with her nonsensically-coquetti
lace cap and blue ribbons on, undreaming of m
escape. Then I turned away with light a

bounding steps towards the many-coloured undulations of that mountain range where I supposed I should find a secure refuge from the researches of my educational Ceres.

Ceres!—Yes: the Parisienne's classiques had made my poor young head a perfect pantheon of all those dusty, mutilated gods and goddesses!

Yet even Trusty Gelert, I am bound to admit, looked at me with surprise and inquiry in his eyes when, after traversing the park, we emerged on a desolate, grass-grown highway, with our faces still turned towards the distant hills.

We had seldom extended our rambles beyond the seven-barred, moss-overgrown gate over which I now scrambled. It was one hardly ever opened, being a very by-exit to the domain, I had purposely selected. Gelert, however, pushed his way through a gap in the hedge without hesitation when he saw me climb the gate,—startling scores of rabbits among the yellow fern in the wood we left behind.

I had sufficient knowledge of things to be aware that I should be easily traced if I kept the high roads—lonesome as for many a mile of thinly-inhabited country they spread. I there-

fore diverged as often as possible from my direct route, among plantations and fields,—my only guide the constant presence of the swelling line of hills I desired to reach.

This circuitous progress, of course, greatly lengthened the journey. Both Gelert and myself began to feel fatigued before the continuous rise in the ground, the descent and rapidity of the streams we passed, gave notice that we had entered on the mountain region we had been so long approaching. Perhaps we had not gone ten miles of direct road. Finally, Gelert began to turn his head, wistfully, from time to time, in the direction of his chain and hutch. But I was determined not to turn to mine! I knew that I had already offended beyond forgiveness; and even forgiveness would be accompanied by that rank, unwholesome, Parisian kiss!

We wended on. By-and-by, a new misfortune assailed us. We both grew very hungry; and Trusty Gelert, by his frequent yawnings and dissatisfied lappings at the streamlets we crossed, seemed, as I thought, to reproach me with the lack of his accustomed meal.

I had not calculated on this animal necessity, common to myself and my four-footed fellow-

traveller. I had even, in my ignorance, deprived myself of the best and most tangible means of supplying our wants, when I left my small stock of money behind. I had calculated on always meeting with people like the kindly cottagers of our valleys, who considered themselves honoured when the rambling little heiress of Mauleverer shared their frugal repasts.

I had hitherto carefully avoided approach to any human habitation; but now, when I imagined I might with safety ask for what I needed in one, I found myself apparently isolated, winding my fatigued and stumbling way up a narrow, flinty road that seemed fast penetrating into the dark bowels of the mountains before me.—Dark, indeed! for—strangely enough, I thought—all the beautiful play of colours I had so often admired at a distance, vanished from the dun and melancholy sides of the hills as I approached. It began also to grow shadowy: sunset was at hand; and it seemed, even to my inexperience, that it would be accompanied by a storm.

And now, in addition to the uneasy sensations caused by the gnawings of the wolf that makes his lair in mortal stomachs, I was assailed by a new and hitherto unknown feeling. The utter

solitariness of the way, the awful glimpses into gorges and glens on either hand, began to affect me with a degree of fear. I disliked to look at Gelert, whose usually staunch and erect carriage was also cowed. He carried his large, tawny lion head droopingly; his tongue lolled—his tail was strictly clasped to his haunches.

For the first time I began to experience the uneasy and irksome sense of responsibility. I had taken Gelert from his home, where he was at all events, carefully housed and fed. Perhaps to consign him with myself to a bed under the cold stars—to hunger—even to absolute starvation! It was worse with him, indeed, than with me, in this latter respect: I reflected remorsefully that I had refreshed myself with a good number of brambleberries — delicacies which Gelert refused to share, with many rueful waggings of the tail, and a well-founded suspicion gaining upon him, I daresay, poor fellow, that he had entrusted his destiny to a very inefficient ruler.

Nothing in general indeed can exceed the solitude of the Glamorgan highlands. On market days, or other occasions of repair to the towns in the valleys, it is of course different.

Under these circumstances, I must confess I began to lose heart, and even at times to consider whether I had not done rather a rash thing! I reflected, with some regret, that this time I should have got through the task assigned me, and be entitled to a plentiful meal, served in silver, on a fine damask cloth. My hateful governess, indeed, before me, with her glazed Chinese visage, and fixed, gimblet-working eyes, watching every morsel I took, and prescribing the etiquette of the table to me at every turn!

Remembering this, I resumed my resolution, and boldly continued my ascending journey.

At last I came to a level between what then appeared to me two vast mountains, which, gradually contracting, formed, at the extremity of the valley, a narrow pass. I could perceive the white rush of a rapid stream, apparently from the monstrous jaws of the chasm, traversing a deep ravine along the sides of one of these mountains. The bright purple tops of some still loftier elevations, visible above the pass, only deepened by contrast the black gloom and frown of the foreground. At the same time it marked, to an eye from infancy observant of nature, the nigh departure of the sun. The

mountains themselves, forming this dark valley were bare and bleak, broken with rock and furze, but with scarcely a vestige of herbage, and without a tree.

The idea of wandering in this solitude a night, exposed to the risk of falling over some of the precipitous verges I discerned the route passed along, struck me with dismay.

In other respects the road itself was a remarkably good one; smoothly macadamised and apparently intended for the carriage of heavy goods. I noticed the trace of broad wheels and then of a sudden I was struck by discerning that a kind of black dust was strewed lavishly along the tracts, and that large ebony fragments were scattered about. I examined one of the pieces, and found it to be coal. And now was I seized with a dread suspicion that I was approaching the neighbourhood of some mines of this mineral!

Dread, because about Mauleverer, the Glamorgan miners were held in anything but favour and esteem. They were stated to be of a wild and untractable character even towards their own employers. On all occasions of political turmoil, they figured dangerously, and had

pecially evinced very great animosity and violence against my father, as a nobleman of Conservative principles, during the then recent Chartist demonstrations. There were no mines at work in these mountains in Megan Jenkins's time, consequently I had no apprehensions of such a misadventure as I seemed now likely to come upon.

I had been walking on, though with faint and dubious steps, when this conviction, after glowering long, suddenly leaped upon me! I stopped in panic. It would never do for me to proceed among a people who I remembered had attempted to stone my father as he rode on a market day through Llandaff. If they should discover who I was, would they not treat me even worse, being less able to protect myself? and unprovided with the fleet steed that was thought to have saved the life of my father, driven from that unfair field?

I sat down, quite spent and frightened, on one of some large masses of stones that strewed the wayside, to reflect. I had scarcely done so, when I heard a faint mutter of thunder, and looking up, I perceived the tops of the hills curling over with black, lurid-edged clouds. I

had now no doubt that a storm was about burst, and the conviction overcame my remainin courage. I began to sob aloud, while Gele seating himself mournfully at my feet, conte plated me with wondering compassion in l large sagacious eyes.

It was at this moment that I heard a voi say: "Will your dog bite, little girl, or can y make him keep quiet while I come down an see what is the matter with you?"

I looked up in surprise, and then, for th first time, I noticed that I was sitting on one the stones of a very large circle of similar one They were arranged seemingly by art, the hollow formed by a rapid dip in th hills towards the pass; and besides this out circumference, there was a centre piece reser bling an immense square table of hewn granit supported by seven separate masses of the sar material. This table was broken nearly in tw halves, which it must certainly have required t strokes of ages to effect, and was partial covered with moss and lichen. It was from t top of one of these divisions that the voi addressing me proceeded.

"Little girl!" The style did not please n much as I felt in need of human speech a

counsel. I was then upwards of fifteen years of age, and was a tall agile-limbed girl. I fancied I ought to impress beholders with the notion of a young woman, and not of a girl at all. And "little girl," too!

Moreover, when I glanced up at the speaker, what did I behold? A little fellow himself, truly! a boy who seemed scarcely half my age or size, I thought, as he stood now upright on the rocky table, where previously he had been lying, possibly asleep, possibly merely in revery. He had a boy's cross-bow, however, in hand, with which he might have been aiming at small birds.

I noticed at once what a small, pallid, saturnine visage the boy had. It was a very sickly aspect too—which effect was increased by his singularly profuse masses of long, thick, raven black hair, and large, melancholy, sunken eyes, of a remarkably clear and languid blue.

On the whole, the young stranger did not strike me very favourably. I liked more showy externals. Moreover, I was vexed to see that he was not dressed like a common peasant lad—in whom I could have put trust. His slender figure was garbed in fine broadcloath, black, as if he was in

mourning. His straw hat had also a black ribbon round it. His linen, where it appeared at the cuffs and collar of his jacket and trousers, was beautifully white. He had a very small delicate hand. He spoke pure English. In short, I perceived that he was a person probably much of my own rank—and I desired to make the acquaintance of none such.

"If you are afraid of the dog," I answered, disdainfully, "you need not come down. I don't want anybody to see what is the matter with me. I only want to know my way to a place where I am going to."

"I am not afraid of anything!" returned the boy, with sudden and fiery vivacity, and his eye shone up like a young vulture's as he spoke. "I am a Welsh gentleman! So if your dog worries me—(I only spoke on his account!)—I'll worry him—and with this!"

I saw the gleam of a large clasp knife opening, as he spoke; and setting it firmly clenched in his teeth, the boy scrambled down one of the rough pillars of his Simeon Stylites elevation to the ground.

Gelert was certainly not awed either by the personal appearance or menace of his young

defier. But he seemed very far from forming any project of attack, even had I not withheld him, as I did, by his shaggy lion mane. On the contrary, he looked in a friendly manner at the lad as he approached us—in a fearless, determined style, rather in contrast with his diminutive and withered little frame.

"Ah!" he said with a smile, as he came close to us, shutting up his knife again with a sharp click; "there is no occasion for it. Your dog, I'll warrant, is of a good Welsh breed, and knows a gentleman of mine to be a trustworthy fellow wherever he meets him!—And now," he continued, pausing and regarding me with evidently growing curiosity and surprise, "where did you say you wanted to go to?"

"I want to go somewhere—somewhere in the mountains here, where there are cottages and cows and sheep, sir: I am going to be a servant-maid at a sheep farm! Do you know of any that I could easily walk to—before it is quite dark?" I said in considerable confusion; for I saw that those large eyes continued to expand with an incredulous and perhaps rather alarmed stare.

"A servant at a sheep farm!—Now you tell

the truth;" the boy returned, with strange eagerness. "You are a *fairy!* Are you not?"

This question was put to me with such earnestness and seeming credulity that I could not help breaking into a laugh.

"I wish I were, *little boy!*" I said, amply reciprocating his adjective. "I should not then long be in want of a supper and a night's lodging—and I would have a great piece of beef her immediately for my dog."

I could easily discern that the young gentleman did not seem pleased with the retort. A slight flush visited his pale countenance. "But you lowlanders know nothing of fairies—and indeed they are almost banished from their homes in the mountains too!" he said, in an affronted tone; but it changed immediately to one of great softness and tenderness as he continued: "You are a human orphan then!"

"I am worse than that—my father and mother are alive, but care nothing for me . . . and so . . . and so I have left them, and am going to try and earn my own living!" I concluded, passionately; but I must admit—with a renewed and very unheroic burst of weeping.

"Don't cry!" the little fellow observed, with

evident sympathy. "I hate to see women cry always!—But do you really not know where you are, that you talk of cows and sheep-farming on the Howel Myndd Dhu?"

I remembered immediately to have heard of this district, and under the hostile associations of chartism and rioters I have mentioned above. "Is it a place where there are mines?" I enquired, quite wo-begone.

"If you go through the pass yonder, a sparrow's flight, you need only ask your own senses! The whole mountain on the other side is as hollow as a honeycomb, with their works; and you can see their furnaces raging like a hell, night and day, in the valleys below, for they are at it constantly tearing out its bowels for coal and ore!" replied my informant, with evident bitterness.

"Are there any houses there—or places where one could get something to eat?" resumed poor hungry I.

"There *are* houses—at least there are lots of dismal black huts where the miners live. But it would never do for you to go among them, you know!"

"Why not? I *must*—the dog is very hungry

as well! And besides, don't you think, sir, ther is going to be a storm?"

"Yes—a thunderstorm; or else it will go o in a mist, where you would be sure to lose you self, and most likely get dashed to pieces dow some precipice," said the young mountainee looking around him. "I came out inde purposely, to hear it bellow among the crags a rocks. But as to your taking shelter with t colliers and smelters at Howel lead ore works— don't you know what a set they are? Have y never heard down in the valleys there? T roughest devils in the world! Why, old Su himself can hardly keep them in order; and was made to rule them, I think! And such beautiful girl as you are! If you were my sis I would as soon let you, in reality, walk i hell fire!"

Energetic as this expression was, what stru me to the exclusion of every other idea, was t name of Suett. Not for its vulgarity, a strangeness in that part of the country, eithe My mother had incidentally informed me of fact which I now adduced in the manner question, in order to ascertain if I had reason for the vivid hope that suddenly visited m

"Is it a Mr. Suett, sir, that got made member of parliament for the county, and turned out a gentleman that ought to have sat for it—years ago, an Honourable Mr. Pomeroy—when old Lord Mauleverer was alive?"

"Old Suett *is* a member of parliament—represents what I think they call the coal-and-metal interest: I know that!—Oh, yes, it was he that beat the Mauleverers—on their own dunghills—I have often heard him laugh and boast!"

"Well! has he not got a house about here, where he lives?" I exclaimed, eagerly.

"Yes, he has a house where he has no right to have one," returned the boy, gloomily.

"Called Plas Newydd?"

"Yes, Plas Newydd. You don't suppose he would have the impudence to call it after anything about here, while a single stone of the old Castell Ap Howel stands on the other?"

The lad's eyes flashed with the blue lustre of polished steel, as he uttered these words..

"I don't know—I don't care!" I replied, quite wild with joy. "But I am sure I have a friend then at Plas Newydd who will make me welcome, and for whose sake the people

there will, perhaps, be kind to me and my poor Gelert! Is there not a Miss Sophia Sutcliffe, a governess, at Plas Newydd?"

"Oh! do you know her?" returned my young interlocutor, with an evident expression of surprise and disapprobation in his tone. "But no, she can't be any friend of yours, I am sure! And besides, she is going to leave Plas Newydd very soon, and is not at all in favour there at present, I can tell you!"

"Why, what has she done to offend them?" inquired I, in surprise and indignation, but struck nevertheless with something peculiar in the lad's manner.

"Oh, it is not so much what she has done as what she has tried to do! She is a regular flirt, and tries it on every one, you know!—*Don't* you know what I mean? She was after the Suetts' eldest son and heir, in particular—Mr. Scarlatt, the sublime and beautiful of the family! But the mother Suett has a pair of sharp eyes of her own, too, and saw through my lady's tricks, I have no doubt, though she only pretends Sophia is too much of a *finishing governess* for her little girl, Bronwen Suett, and that that is why she is going to change! Sophy is a

deuced cunning one, too, I own! She wanted it to be thought she was making love with Luxmoor, the tutor; but I shouldn't in the least wonder—for he's a rascally, sneaking fellow in my opinion—that he found her out, and put the mother Suett on her guard, just from spite and jealousy, you know!"

I stared astounded at this revelation! Yet I could scarcely comprehend at all the movement of intrigue indicated to my inexperience by the keen-sighted and prematurely-developed boy. Nevertheless, I understood in general that blame and accusation were directed against my favourite, and that she was in disgrace at Plas Newydd. A recollection flashed upon me simultaneously—"Ah, it is just as she said!" I exclaimed; "she knew she should not suit long in a vulgar, plebeian family that had risen from nothing to be—nothing very particular, after all! only people that get iron and coal out of deep, black, nasty holes—and sell it! That is why you dislike Miss Sutcliffe about here, I suppose? You are one of the little Suetts I dare say?"

"You are mistaken then, young lady—mistaken more than ever you were in your life before!" returned the boy, angrily. "I am an

Ap Howel—*the* Ap Howel, now my grandfather and uncle are dead! And I am no partizan even of the Suetts—nor do I like them—hardly at all, though old Suett is my guardian, and his wife is kind enough to me—perhaps kinder than I deserve. But I *hate* Scarlatt Suett," he continued, with extraordinary vehemence, "and I have cause. He mocks at me because I am lame, and because I am a gentleman, and because I had Welsh princes for ancestors, and because I am poor! Whereas, who has made me so?—Old Suett, who fooled my stupid, doting grandfather, and my uncle Llywarch, into parting with all their property in these hills to him and his company, forsooth! persuading them that they were of next to no value, because they had no money to work the mines; and they were two such extravagant, mad, rackety fellows, they parted with all they could part with for a song! But they could *not* part with the old ruin of Ap Howel, and the land it stands on, until I came of age, to be beggared too, and give my consent to relinquishing the few acres that remain to a name that once possessed the whole range of these highlands merely as a deer forest! But that I never will! A

if I live, I will force that Scarlatt fellow, at all events, to show me by what right he and his upstart race have taken my mountains from me, and pitched their detestable new house right under the ruins of my castle of Howel—which mean some day to rebuild !"

"Oh, dear me ! what will become of me ? Such people, I am sure, would not give me the slightest protection or refreshment, or my poor dog either !" I sobbed.

"Don't do that !" the boy resumed, in an altered and feeling tone. "They are not so bad as that—they are not bad at all—at least, my guardian and his wife are not ! If you don't mind going as a beggar to Plas Newydd, and asking what you want for charity, you can have as much as you can eat and drink for a week, at a meal."

"But I am not a beggar !" I said, with huge disdain.

"I did not think you were," returned the boy, with a singular glance of his deep-set, considerate eyes. "But I think I know what you are !"

"What am I ?"—in great alarm.

"You are a girl that has run away from

school, because you are tired of doing samplers and that sort of thing—perhaps where the Sophia was a teacher!—and so you have been fascinated into running on a wildgoose chase after her! I quite understand that! I liked her myself at first, until I found her out."

"You tell falsehoods of her, I know, you wicked boy!" I exclaimed,—my weariness and fear yielding to indignation at this continued assault on my favourite.

"Oh, *you* would not understand it, of course but *I* dontlike to see the women after the men and laying themselves out like—like—I won't say *what*, but I know—to catch fellows! And besides, what a fool she must be, with all her cunning, not to see that Scarlatt would as soon think of marrying her as I should of marrying a wandering gipsy,—my ancestors having been kings of these hills!" returned the young gentleman, with a smile writhing over his thin curled upper lip, but not so much, apparently in ridicule of his own as of poor Sophia's loft aspirations.

"Well, at least," I said, mournfully looking round, "I suppose I can go and burrow, like a fox, under these great stones, for the night

and if I am starved to death among the savages up in these mountains, in a day or two, it don't matter—nobody will care!"

"Under these stones!" repeated the boy, in a dismayed tone. "You must not even think of it! Do you know what they are?—It is the Kerig y Drudion—the Druids' Altar,—upon which they used to offer human sacrifices thousands of years ago! It is the worst luck in the world even to walk under these stones, to this day! The Ap Howels have never prospered since my great grandfather—like a madman as *he* was, too—gave a ball in the Circle of Destiny, and a feast under the altar! Not one of those who sat at it, I have heard say, died a natural death!—But, come," he continued, eagerly, "if you really don't mind taking up your lodging in a ruin, I can show you through the pass to Castell Ap Howel, where the ravens, and crows, and its master, will make you very welcome! And don't be afraid but what I will manage to get you something to eat. Dame Ruddles, the housekeeper at Plas Newydd, is very fond of me, and will let me have anything I want from the larder. She knows I often lodge all kinds of tramps—poor old blind Caradoc, the harper, especially—

in my ruin, though they are not allowed at New Place!"

"If you will promise to bring Sophia S cliffe to see me at once, I will go with you, since you say you are a gentleman!" I repl with some hesitation; for though so m a boy, Madame Le Crampon had taught suspicion and reserve towards the whole s But I had considered also that it would not proper for me to go under the roof of pers for whom I knew my father had so much dis and contempt as the Suetts, and who had b the means of inflicting on him what I very v understood to be the great mortification overthrow of his life.

"A gentleman? I am a *chieftain!*" retur my young host; and his small form seemed dilate and grow taller as he drew it up v pride on the word. "But perhaps," he adc "you Saxons and lowlanders think more o man if he has an English title tacked to name? Well, my grandfather was stupid enou to allow them to make a paltry baronet of l in London; and as he is dead, and my un and my father, I believe I am called now Vivian Ap Howel! The Suetts always call

so: but I don't care to be a thing that is neither bird nor beast; so please always call me by my name without the Sir.—Who would be a Sir, when even old Suett expects to be made one some day for being a rich coal-owner?"

"I shall call you Vivian," I said, frankly, "as if you were a brother: but both my brothers are dead now."

"And what shall I call you?—not sister;—I won't call you sister, mind!" replied the boy.

While I was hesitating what answer to make, two large splashes of thunder-rain fell upon my cheeks.

"I will tell you when you bring Sophia to me, if she thinks I ought," was my elusive observation. "But do take me in somewhere out of the storm!"

"Come along," said young Vivian, extending his delicate hand. "But you must let me lead you. I see now that it is going to be a white mist; and we may lose one another if I do not. Don't you see how the clouds are rolling down the hills? We must try and get through the pass of the Rhaiadr Dhu—the Black Torrent there—before they are upon us, or we may chance to slip into it!"

While the boy was yet speaking, I was dismayed to observe what volumes of slatey-grey clouds were crowding down into the valley of the ravine from all the hill sides. I did not hesitate to give him my hand, and I felt that it was clasped tightly in his, but with a degree of nervous tremor. Perhaps he thought that this latter fact required some explanation. "My heart never trembles," he said, apologetically, "but my hand often does. I was born too soon, they tell me, because my mother was frightened with the news of my father being killed in battle in India. She died herself in a few months after,—and I inherit her weak constitution, I suppose! But do you know that you are very like her, in the miniature they found on my father's dead body?—I can show it you. The riband is stained with his heart's blood quite plainly, though it was red to begin with! However, the doctor says I shall grow to be a strong man yet, if I take care: and even my lame foot can be cured in London, when I grow strong enough to stand the hacking and cutting necessary!"

"Oh, are you lame?" I observed. "I did not notice that; you go on quite fast—as fast

as I and Gelert can well keep pace with you."

He looked intensely gratified. "I don't allow people to see that I am lame if I can help it," he said, sturdily; and went on at even an increased rate, so that I was obliged at last to say, "But I am so tired, I cannot go so fast!"

"What a brute I am—I forgot!" said the boy, with emotion. "But we shall soon be through the Mynydd Howel, and it will be well if we can manage it before the mist thickens. It's a very dangerous water, and an unlucky one for us Ap Howels—though it would be a lucky one for the Suetts if I were to lose my footing on the bridge, and the last Ap Howel go the road of our luckless ancestress, Bronwen the White-Necked! Only think, the Suetts actually called their little girl after *her*, because they thought our names must be stylish!"

"Who was Bronwen the White Necked, and where did she go?" I asked.

We were skirting the edge of the ravine as I made the inquiry. To my surprise, I found that the path ascended rapidly, while the yawning fissure below continued to deepen into precipices of black rock of a prodigious altitude.

"I'll tell you," replied my young guide "The White-Necked Bronwen was the most beautiful lady that ever lived; and unless you should grow up to be a woman as handsome as you are now—that ever will live!" he continued, with extraordinary gallantry in one so young. But all he said and did was far in advance of his years! "And Bronwen was the wife of the chieftain of our name in the time of Llywelyn the Great. And we were good friends, as it happened in those days, with the Lord Marchers of Mauleverer, for a wonder! as in general it was our favourite occupation to burn one another's houses down, harry one another's lands, and kill and maim one another's vassals, without stint or mercy! And so Baron Reginald of Mauleverer came on a visit to the Lord of Howel, and spent some very pleasant weeks with him, I imagine; for after he had gone back to his own castle, it appeared, he must keep up a correspondence with ours! And a secret one, too—with the Lady of Howel! Do you know what was the meaning of that? Well, no matter; it did not please the Lord of Howel when he found it out; so what do you think he did?—Proclaimed a new feast—a grand hunt of the wolf and deer; we had plenty

of them both then on the Myndd Howel, and invited his friend to join him again in the banquet and chase. My Lord of Mauleverer was very glad, of course, of the opportunity to see Bronwen of the White Neck at his ease once more—and accepted joyfully. Up the mountain came he,—I dare say, in his very handsomest suit for gala occasions, not suspecting that he had more use for armour. But it would have done the treacherous villain little good either, for no sooner was he in Castell Howel, than they destroyed the bridge of a single tree across the torrent, by rolling it over, so that his retainers might not follow him in; and then hung him above it, by a branch of an oak, whose blasted trunk still remains to this day, rooted in the rocks, in defiance of the storms of five hundred years. And then the Lord of Howel went in to his lady, who was sitting in her bower, busked in her finest robe of white samite, expecting the arrival of the Norman lord—and invited her to come to her window and see with what goodly fruit the trees were hung — the ballad says—to regale their guest withal! At that time the castle walls of Howel ran right along the edge of the precipice, whose shadow

we are now passing under—over the fi
here of the torrent—don't you see it?
was to a room in the tower right above
we now stand, that the Lady of Howel wa
ducted, and where she was made to look
what her jealous lord had been doing. A
soon as ever she saw it, she screamed o
words we took afterwards as our motto c
geance: O beth y wnaf fi?—O what s
do? and threw herself headlong out
window, with her open arms, on the h
carcase of her lover. They say their
together broke off the branch of the oa
down they both went, she clasping the
still, all the three falls of the torrent in
lake at the foot of the mountain—What
you tremble so?"

"You must have been a treacherou
vengeful, cruel people always, you Ap H
to do such deeds, and to approve of them
I exclaimed, tearing my hand away fro
young guide's grasp.

"We always took vengeance where w
wronged, and will, and that I shall l
Suetts know some day," returned Vivian,
ing his small teeth like a young tige

when first the instinct of slaughter kindles in its blood.

The noise of falling water had been for some time gaining on our hearing, but it was now absolutely deafening as we entered the chasm that separates at this point the two ranges of mountain elevations forming the Mynydd Howel. But we could not see the torrent. We were involved in so thick, though white and steam-like a mist, that it seemed as though we were at the bottom of an immense inverted funnel of seething brewage, through which it was not possible to discern objects even at the distance of a few feet.

I was obliged to give my hand again to the young mountaineer baronet to guide me along. And after all, I confided myself to his care with a strange implicitness. I was so trained to estimate persons by their rank in society, that no doubt I considered myself the safer with my guide for being a baronet, even on an occasion when rank could be of so little practical value.

After a short but perhaps, with one less familiar with the way, a perilous walk, we emerged on an irregular rocky plateau, elevated above a

vast mountainous valley on the farther side the Rhaiadr Dhu pass.

Singularly enough, there was no mist at on this side of the mountain. It was s illumined by a dun red sunset, that spread glow of an expiring furnace over the ent scene—a magnificent one! We stood on proud pinnacle, as it were, above it. The ro around us were strewed with the shattered mains of a tower and of some walls of mass masonry, all overgrown with white lichen a moss. The first cataract of the Rhaiadr D thundered out of the still loftier elevation precipices of the pass behind us; thence descended the sides of the mountain at a he long rate, and in three separate gigantic le over as many piles of precipices. Its cou could be plainly tracked through the thi woods that clothed the steeps below, by a li of white foam, until it subsided in a small la among the rocks at the base of the mounta Half way down this, bosomed in the woods discerned the glimmering of the roof and wa of a large and stately house, entitled, perha to the appellation of a mansion, built of a g stone. And at the foot of the mountain

tended a dark-coloured plain, intersected by numerous tramroads, and lighted with the occasional gleam of furnaces.

"This *is* Ap Howel Castle, and yonder is Plas Newydd," said Vivian, with a bitterness in the contrast I have never forgotten.

CHAPTER VI.

AP HOWEL TOWER.

In the remains of the tower, however, it speedily appeared that there was at least shelter to be had. Vivian groped under a pile of fallen masonry, before an old oak door that opened into it; found a massive rusty key—and a dark, cell-like chamber was thrown open to my inspection.

I followed him in. It was not without traces of having been recently inhabited. Some half-consumed peat remained on the hearth; there were a couple of stools and a table, formed of an empty cask set on end. In a corner, two or three trusses of straw, thrown together, were the probable substitute for a bed.

"Harper Caradoc is a very orderly, clean old fellow, and he lives here when he is in this part of the country. He is on his *circuit* at present," said my young host, apologetically, perceiving how I was struck with the aspect of these accommodations. "And now do you think you dare remain here alone, while I go to the Plas and get you something to eat?"

"Only tell Miss Sutcliffe to come to me. I don't want anything to eat!" sighed I; and indeed my appetite was quite gone.

"But do you think she *will* come? Such a timorous, selfish creature as she is!"

"She is neither!" I answered pettishly, offended at this constancy in the negation of my idol's perfections. "Still—as she might not like to come to a perfect stranger—such a dreary way as it must be up here from Plas Newydd—you may tell Miss Sutcliffe, if you please, that I am a person who have brought her a message from Mauleverer Castle, and that my name is Hugh-Helena! But promise me on your word of honour, that you will let no one else know anything about me?"

"From Mauleverer Castle!—Hugh-Helena?" repeated young Ap Howel, with an expression

of strongly excited interest—and then a shudder and dark shadowing of the visage. "Why, who can you be? Don't the lord and the lady live abroad? They have a daughter, I have heard—but you cannot—you shall not, be—a Pomeroy of Mauleverer!" he concluded, with singular vehemence.

"Do you think a poor stray creature like me could be one, sir?" I answered, forcing a laugh, for I really felt afraid of him after what he had told me of the feud between our ancestors. "But I was brought up at Mauleverer Castle, and the lord and the lady there allowed my parents to give me their names of Hugh and Helena!"

The boy murmured something to himself which I did not catch. But, much against my wish, he prolonged the delay by setting to work to kindle a fire. He managed this very dexterously, by striking two flints together. Meanwhile Gelert, observing signs of abode, took, as it seemed, formal possession of the straw bed, by turning three or four times in it until he had arranged it to his satisfaction.

"Now I have done all I can for you at present," said Vivian, as soon as he had lighted

the peat into a cheerful glow by fanning it with his straw hat. "I have no candles, nor rushes even, which old Caradoc generally burns. But I shall not be gone long, whether that woman will come or not. Most likely she will not! She has a fancy that I am often up to playing her tricks, though they are all that crafty fool Luxmoor's doings, to annoy her, because I believe he has found her out jilting him. You school-girls do not know what jilting is, though, perhaps? But, whether Sophia comes or not, you will have me back as faithfully as a bird to its nest. Make yourself comfortable, meanwhile, and don't pay any attention to the noise of the cataract! Else, perhaps, you will be thinking you hear a woman's scream on it—and that is *very* unlucky!"

And with this singular piece of advice, but with evident slowness and reluctance, my young entertainer took his departure.

I confess that I felt very strangely as soon as I found myself alone in this dismal ruin. More especially as a very few minutes after Vivian had gone, I perceived all around the tower became involved in a mist like that I thought I had left behind in the valley of the Kerig y Drudion.

This had a white, shroud-like appearance, finitely more appalling to me than the thic darkness could have been! I nestled close the peat fire, and for the first time repe thoroughly of my rash adventure.

Very shortly afterwards, a tempest of digious fury and violence burst among the l Such thunder I had never heard before; it reverberated in a thousand giants' voices i the numerous echoes in the mountains. M tain seemed indeed calling to mountain! rain descended in torrents; it beat against stony sides of the hills as if its errand were certainty to wash them to a level with the p below.

I acknowledge that I was stricken with a and, for a girl of my natural courage, an i plicable panic. And the impression mad my imagination by the tragical tale that as ated my ancestors with those of the race u whose ruined roof I rested, must have singularly powerful! I know not how o wise to account for the fact I am about to r and which, I am aware, may lay me open, in opinion of some who know me not, to a cl

either of superstitious credulity, or of romantic invention.

After remaining for a time where I had been left—terrified as I was with the uproar of the elements without—I was seized with an extreme restlessness, insomuch that I found it quite impossible to attempt remaining still over the dark, flameless fire. I made my way at last to the door of the tower, hoping to espy the approach of my friend, Sophia, or at all events the return of young Vivian. This door, which he had closed firmly to exclude the weather, opened with some difficulty. And just as I had succeeded in pushing it back on its large rusty hinges—one of the most fearful though indistinct cries that ever came to mortal hearing, broke upon mine! It was not the howl of a dog, though it resembled it. Human anguish was plainly mingled in the unearthly utterance! Simultaneously my gaze had fallen on the black, hurrying mass of waters, which I now perceived swept immediately below the tower where I stood, to form the Rhaiadr Dhu. And unless indeed it was as remarkable a case of visual hallucination as any on record, I saw a woman's form, in a long white robe tangled with

some other gleaming mass, flurry past, as if on a stream of lightning, down the rushing waters! At the same time—though possibly this was only an additional deception of my excited senses acted on by the memory—I thought I distinctly heard shrieked, as the phantoms vanished over the fall, those Welsh words, which under ordinary circumstances it would have been very difficult for me to remember—the cry of the despairing Bronwen—"O beth y wnaf fi?"

The terror I experienced at that moment in some degree returns upon me even now! I tried to believe that the howl was Gelert's. But though the poor animal had followed me to the door, as soon as he saw my steps bent that way, he stood there by my side, silently and droopingly, glaring forth upon the furious storm. I put my hand down to him, and felt his powerful frame and nerves all of a quake! Was he also aware of a presence of the supernatural, or merely dismayed at the novelty of his own and his mistress's situation?

I remained trembling and gazing bewilderedly forth on the tempestuous spectacle: how long, I can hardly conjecture. But, on a sudden, I heard voices—and one in particular which I

well remembered exclaimed: "Good heavens! it is she!—But what is the matter with her? She seems petrified! My dearest, dearest child! do you not remember me, your own poor Sophia Sutcliffe!"

"She has seen the Spirit of the Fall—look, how she still stares down the stream!" ejaculated Vivian, who was Sophia's only companion. "Bring her in, Miss Sutcliffe, at once!—I am sure she has either seen or heard the Lady of the Rhaiadr Dhu!"

"You foolish boy!—But there is nothing you will not say or do to annoy and frighten people," returned Sophia, irritated and agitated almost equally. "Remember, this young lady is not a poor governess, on whom you can put off your mischievous jests without fear of being called to account! You will have to answer to the Lord of a Castle, for frightening his child perhaps into an idiot!—My darling, darling *Miss Pomeroy!*—will you not recollect me?"

"I do, I do, Sophia!—Only the storm is so dreadful—and I am half blinded by the lightning. Let us go in, and I will tell you all!"

I had thrown myself into Sophia's arms. She almost carried me into the tower;—and

it was a considerable time after before either of us noticed that Vivian remained on the exterior.

The fatigue and terror I had suffered brought on a nervous climax. I yielded to an hysterical paroxysm of joy and grief—which Sophia herself appeared in some measure to share. Nay, I will not doubt that she did. She could not always have been playing a part with me. She had no reason at that time to fancy herself justified in hating me! I even think that she must at one time have loved me as much as it was in her nature to love any one but herself. The confidence and affection I showed for her must have moved her. I am sure she joined her tears with mine, and she exhausted herself in efforts to soothe and compose me.

In my first agitation I told her of the portent I considered I had seen and heard, which she dismissed at once as a creation of the imagination acting on the foolish story I confessed my young guide had told me, as a veracious legend, of the torrent. "These supernatural tales are all lies together!" she exclaimed; "and that boy invents all kinds of wonderful things of the sort, and palms them off as authentic legends

of the district. It is surprising what wicked, horrible ideas he has, child as he is! You must not believe a word he says about any one, ghost or living being—he is so fond of speaking evil of everybody and everything! Forget all about this trash, my dearest child, and tell me what strange fortune can have put you up here in the mountains? I have been a thousand times for coming to see you, but your father's rejection of me made me fancy that I should no longer be welcome at Mauleverer, under any pretext. And besides, I have some degree of pride and human feeling! and I imagined myself in a manner expelled from his lordship's roof."

After a while I grew sufficiently composed to enter into the required explanation. Sophia listened to me with undisguised amazement. "Are you Welsh all mad together?" she exclaimed, when I had related what I considered the justification of my flight from Mauleverer. "Excuse me, darling! I own your Frenchwoman must have been an intolerable and detestable old nightmare, squatted on a free, young buoyant heart like yours; but, my dearest young lady! to what frightful dangers have you ex-

posed yourself! In what ignorance of the world and of the brutality and cruelty of mankind, must they have brought you up! To venture as you have done! A poor, beggarly wretch like myself—I could not have dared what you have dared—perhaps even for the prospect of all the advantages you have made up your young, inexperienced mind, you say, to forfeit for ever! Child as you are, your reputation might be endangered by so extraordinary a step—and you cannot dream what our miserable sex has to suffer when once that is breathed on!"

"I hated my governess so, Sophia!" I whimpered. "And people who know how I love you, will think I ran away to you; and, indeed, if I had known where you were to be found, I would have gone nowhere else in all the world!"

"Poor child! how strangely and cruelly they must have neglected you, to make the little sympathy and tenderness I could offer you so precious!" Sophia said, feelingly. "But, dear Miss Pomeroy, unless you want to destroy me completely — to bring down on my head the indignation and revenge of your influential family—you will not allege that I have anything to do in this extraordinary freak!

Well, but," she continued, and a smile of triumph, mingled with some more painful feelings, played for a moment on her quivering lips— "Well, but my Lord Mauleverer will perhaps be sorry, when he hears the news, that he would not suffer his daughter to follow her own inclination in the choice of poor, starved, Edmund Sutcliffe's orphan for a governess! Still, my dear child, it is only quite by a merciful accident that you find me still among these detestable mountains. Mrs. Suett has given me notice to quit, and I am to quit in a few days."

"Why, what have you done, dear Sophia, to vex her?" I answered, quite forgetful or incredulous of all Vivian had told me on the subject; "or are you discontented with the situation yourself, as you seem to dislike mountains so?"

"Discontented with the situation! — I beg pardon for repeating your words, but how could that possibly be, dear Miss Pomeroy?" replied Sophia, smiling bitterly, as she continued chafing my cold hands in her own. "What, I should like to know, could any rational being, endowed with the commonest faculties of appreciation, require more than the advantages that surround me at Plas Newydd? Don't I live in a fine

mansion? Do I not enjoy the perpetual society of a most amiable little lady, of ten years old, whose improvement is my sole business and pleasure, apparently, on this fine earth of ours? To be sure, it is a little like treadmill work—which they say is so wearisome, because you cannot see signs of much progress made. Of course, in so young a scholar! Still, you cannot tell how diverting it is to have it in commission to manufacture a grown-up mind for an infant—for Mrs. Suett insists that her children shall have no childhood, and that little Bronwen is to be cultivated at once into a prodigy! Oh, no, you cannot think, dearest Miss Pomeroy, that I am going to leave Plas Newydd because I wish to leave it?"

"Why, then, is it true that you have received your discharge, because—because——" I hesitated.

"Has young Ap Howell already been telling his lies against me to you, too?" she inquired, glancing at me with a ravening suspicion in her eyes.

"He told me about—about the young gentleman at the house and you!" I said frankly.

"The young gentleman!—Mr. Scarlatt Suett,

of course! Believe me, dear child, if you know what he means by it, there is not the slightest foundation for anything that bad boy says! He wants, I suppose, to deprive me of the chance of earning my existence even in the miserable way I am forced to earn it, Miss Pomeroy—subject to all the caprices and insolence of the foolish women who are chiefly at the heads of families where governesses are required—condemned to the perpetual society of children, without a stimulating word or object from day to day, or year to year! You cannot tell what a malicious mannikin that Sir Vivian Ap Howel is! The most discontented, restless little wretch under the face of the sun, too! Every one hates and fears him, though Mrs. Suett pretends to make a great deal of him, because she adores rank as a Chinese adores his gilded trumpery of a joss; and he is some beggarly Welsh baronet or other! And besides, the people about here say the Suetts have cheated him and his family out of their property; and they want to make sure he will not bring them some day to account, by marrying him to their daughter, my little wax-doll pupil, Bronwen. Oh, no; the motive assigned for my dismissal is not the true one;

but Mrs. Suett is not in the least afraid that her selfish, aspiring *parvenu* of a son would ever think of a poor governess—a starved curate's daughter—as anything but a defenceless creature, whom he can try the effect of his wonderful beauties, mental and corporeal, upon, without fear of consequences! In short, my dear, Scarlatt Suett is a coxcomb, and a very naughty fellow; but his mother is no fool, and has not the slightest apprehension of his ever committing himself in any rashly-generous proceeding!"

"Why then are you to leave Plas Newydd, Sophia?"

"Well!... because she is aware I have treated her son's improper advances with the contempt they deserved. She is so besotted in him—she, perhaps, thinks I am playing some deeper game," replied my friend, in evident embarrassment. "I can give you Mrs. Suett's reasons, as she deigned to communicate them to myself, however. She has discovered, after some experience now, that I am too far advanced in 'literature and the sciences in general,'—to use her own words—too accomplished—too a great number of fine, talented things, to be a proper governess

for such a very little girl as Bronwen Suett is found out to be at present. Not but what, when I first came, it struck me that excellent mother would not have considered the goddess Minerva herself too much of a *wiseacress* for the office. In short, I am too good for my post, and so I am, very properly, to be turned out of it! And yet I have always kept carefully under cover all that is really worth attention in my talents or acquirements, not to offend the mediocrities of Plas Newydd."

"We will go away from this stupid place then somewhere together, dear Sophia!" I exclaimed, with a feeling of indignant tenderness. "You shall be my friend, and companion, and sister, but never a governess again."

"I should like to be them *all* to you, dear Miss Pomeroy! And, perhaps, we may manage it now—and Mrs. Suett may not be able to banish me so completely out of the sphere of her son's irresistibility, as she humanely desires," returned Sophia, with her caustic and rather melancholy smile. "No doubt she thinks she will be enabled to make the county—perhaps the country—an unsuitable residence for me, with the help of that young wolfcub's falsehoods!

Ah! she thinks she has him beautifully tamed and domesticated on her hearth now. But I am much mistaken if he don't turn out to have sharp claws like his ancestors some day, and tear the hand that has reared him, as may be imagined, to lap milk!"

"I thought young Sir Vivian was rather a good little chap? He has been kind to me," I observed.

"Oh, that sort of wild beast have all velvety paws enough when they like! But," continued Sophia, with an expression of intense dislike, "does not his very name sound like the howling of the wolves, which they say used to inhabit this part of the country, and which, it seemed, nearly all belonged once to the Powels, or Ap Howels, or whatever they call themselves?"

"I like Ap Howel a great deal better than such nasty, smooth, greasy names as Suett!" I replied, rather vexed at this incessant depreciation of my young friend-in-need, with whom besides my aristocratic instincts made common cause.

"So do I. But then you must consider again the Suetts are rich, and riches cover more sins than charity, we may depend, now-a-days; whereas that stealthy-footed, spiteful little

Welsh catamountain has only got his senseless pride of birth for a patrimony, and he will starve on it some day, I hope!"

"O, Miss Sutcliffe!"

"If you only knew what a tormentor he has been to me, ever since I came to these horrid mountains," said Sophia, perceiving it necessary to interest my feelings against the object of her own dislike. "I have been treated badly enough in other places, but never so badly as at Plas Newydd. We of the middle classes, you know, Miss Pomeroy, never forgive one another any kind of superiorities; and I don't so much wonder at the Suetts trying to mortify me in every possible way, for having some natural talents of my own, that only people in a good position ought to possess. But that boy is not a snob by birth; why needs he, I wonder, have disliked me always so much?"

"They must be a wretched set these Suetts, not to like you, Sophia!"

"Well, but I think I see a means of happy extrication opening before me now," she replied, tenderly taking my hand.

"Except that I will never return to Mauleverer Castle, Sophia, I will do everything in

the whole world I can to make you happy, and take you out of the way of such low, cruel people!" I exclaimed in the warmth of my girlish enthusiasm of friendship.

"But it is only by returning to Mauleverer Castle that you can do me aught of the good you intend, dearest Hugh-Helena! And do you really not know how impossible it would be for you, the daughter of a peer of the realm, and heiress of a great estate—a mere child in years yet, too, though not in mind and heart—to refuse to dwell where your parents and natural guardians may choose you should? To remain concealed is equally out of the question; that malicious boy alone would ferret out who you are in a few hours, and betray you to all the world. And besides, the whole country will soon be up and a-foot to recapture the fugitive little lady of Mauleverer. Neither, if I understand you right, have you fled from your parents—your poor, patient, angelic martyr of a mother especially, whose heart it would break—but from your stupid, varnished-savage of a French governess. But now, if you will take my advice, we are in a position to make terms with your father, and you can include

Sophia Sutcliffe among your articles of capitulation."

"Do you think it will be easily found out where I have gone?" I said, in great agitation.

"It will be impossible to keep you concealed for more than a few days,—but that would be sufficient for our purpose," said Sophia, cheerfully; "I have thought already of a plan. It will annoy Mrs. Suett still more, perhaps, but I don't care for that. I will give out that you are my sister—and indeed I love you better than I should ever have loved a real one, I think!—and say that as she finds me too far advanced for Miss Suett's present capacity, I have taken the liberty of sending for you before I left Plas Newydd, in the hope that you would suit so excellent and desirable a mistress *as nursery governess*. She will not, at all events, think of turning you out until I go too, which is to be in another fortnight, for she did not like to seem in too particular a hurry to get rid of me. And meanwhile, we can write to Lord Mauleverer on the Continent, to propose terms of surrender to him, in the most submissive manner —compatible with a resolute maintenance of one's own will, of course! He will be too heartily

frightened to refuse any by that time, I ir
gine. And in reward for my care of you
the interval, I have no doubt we shall man
to get me placed in Madame Le Crampc
strangely-abused office with the darling cl
whose brilliant faculties it will henceforth becc
the duty and happiness of my life to unfold."

Only the latter part of this project plea
me altogether. But my short experience of
world had satisfied me that I was much n
taken in my estimate of the happiness of a
and wandering life in it. Sophia's reflecti
had irresistibly enlightened me to the folly
even impossibility of the pastoral designs I
formed. I was affected by the allusion to
mother: and then I was so much attached
Sophia, that the prospect of securing her soci
coupled with emancipation from that of my Fre
governess, sufficed to draw me into these vie

Sophia, in fact, laughed me out of my chil
and visionary fancy. "How would you t
your sheep on the mountains in such a tem
as this? What would you do when your h
master requested your assistance in the selec
of the fattest of your fleecy innocents
market?" she said, making the old tower

again with her merriment. "And then have you reflected how often you would be a good deal hungrier than even, I have no doubt, you are at present? Are you not *very* hungry, my poor child? I have been hungry myself," she added, with a gloom of reminiscence overspreading her lighted features; "and I know what hunger does for people, in more ways than making that craving stomach of ours pine! Why, do you know," laughing, "I would have brought you something to eat, only I wanted you to submit to go home with me to Plas Newydd? Nay, my dear proud child, I am only jesting! I feared it would excite suspicion, for I could only account for your arrival and my own venturing out in such stormy weather, by declaring that I expected my sister by 'the cars,' as they call the tramroad waggons at the mines below, and must go out to meet you. It was only the governess, you know, going to welcome a visitor whom she had no right to invite (people who take the wages of others, you are aware, are not entitled to any natural feelings of their own), so no one troubled themselves to render me any assistance. And yet, I am sure, no one at Plas Newydd guessed that

I was to have a guide and companion in th peevish boy in my excursion on the How Mynydd. Well, but now we will get to t house as fast as we can, and give you som thing to revive your dear, exhausted frame."

"But I do not like to go into a house b longing to the Suetts," I said.

"I know why you say so, for they are alwa crowing at their famous victory over yo father," replied Sophia; "but it is quite impos ble we can stay in this dreadful ruin," she adde looking round with a shiver. "I am no believ in ghosts in general or in particular; but if the could be such dismal entities in the world, should certainly think it might be here. B sides, you do not go as a visitor to the *Suetts*- you go to Plas Newydd as *my* visitor — Helena Sutcliffe; and you need scarcely see t family at all, I imagine, unless you please."

I was exhausted, terrified; and I could n conceive anything more satisfactory than place myself under the care and in the consta society of Sophia Sutcliffe. I resigned mys therefore, implicitly to obey her; after, ho ever, she had given me a solemn pledge th under no circumstances, would she surrenc

me to the custody of Madame Le Crampon. With this stipulation I agreed to accompany her to Plas Newydd.

We had concluded on the arrangement, when young Ap Howel reappeared at the entrance of the tower.

"Is your *sister* ready now, Miss Sutcliffe?" he inquired, with a smile on his thin, pale lips, and an emphasis on the word, that denoted how little he was deceived by the assumed relationship. "The storm is quite over; and there is even a bright moonlight breaking from among the clouds. You would say you were among the snowy Alps to see them piled overhead! But I find it impossible to reinstate your umbrella, Miss Sutcliffe," he continued, gravely producing one turned absolutely inside out. "I told you how it would be, you remember."

"I shall never get thoroughly out of my cockney credulites, you know, Sir Vivian!" replied Sophia, with evident causticity in all the playfulness of her manner. "And now umbrellas are of some use in the worst rain that ever falls in London, I am convinced! However, I will take your advice in matters of more importance, in future! and it is a very manly

thing, I can tell you, to be thought competen
to give advice to a young woman of twenty-tw
or three,—especially by the young woman c
twenty-two or three herself! So now, after tha
sugarplum, will you guide us back to Pla
Newydd?—I can't say *home* to Plas Newydd ar
longer, if ever I could! But I so seldom vi
this 'picturesque adornment of the landscap
as Mr. Scarlatt's tutor calls your ancestral ru
here, that I might easily miss the way—else w
would not trouble you certainly to show it."

"Seldom *alone!*" replied young Ap How
"But you might have called *me* sooner had yc
wanted me, Miss Sutcliffe! You must ha
known—on this occasion at all events—that
was outside! Or had you *both* forgotten me
Don't apologize, young lady. I was too th
roughly drenched before, to make the pelting
the storm of any consequence."

"But so delicate as you are in the chest, S
Vivian," said Sophia, "I am not so fond of th
Suetts, I assure you, as to wish you the ve
bad cold you are likely to catch."

"Thank you; but my *chest* will never b
my *coffin!* I have a ghost's word for tha
But you are not credulous in the spiritual worl

Miss Sutcliffe," he answered, in a slightly sneering tone. "You ought to be more apprehensive about your *sister*," he added; "she is not acclimatized as we are to the humors of the Glamorgan hills. And since she is to go to Plas Newydd at all, let us get her as fast as we can to a warm room and bed in it."

"You are quite right, Sir Vivian. But baronets must be very poor indeed to be often wrong at Parvenu Manor House," said Sophia, laughing. "Lead on; we follow.—But this great dog?" she concluded with a look of dismay; singularly enough, for the first time, noticing Gelert, who, quite as singularly, had slunk out of sight from the moment of her arrival, but now rustled out of his straw to accompany us.

"He must go with me, Sophia," I said; "I must not desert him now that he has conveyed me safely to the care of my dearest friend."

"I will take charge of the dog; he will come with me, I know," said Vivian; "you may consider Gelert's welfare confided to me from this time forward, at Plas Newydd, Miss Hugh-Helena."

"My sister's name is *Helena!*" said Sophia.

"Your sister's name *was* Helena; but Troy was taken so long ago, one forgets!" returned

the boy, with a laughing, scornful flash of the eye on Sophia. "Well, is it decided? Come along, Gelert, you belong to a mistress for whose sake you shall be welcome to as decent a kennel as the chief of Ap Howel's bedroom to-night. Gelert, do you call him?" he added, as if rather startled. "What a very unlucky name for a dog! But you lowlanders are so ignorant of omens. Follow me fearlessly, ladies," he concluded, with a slight but very satirical laugh. "Believe me, I do not intend to play any will-o'-th'-wisp tricks to-night."

Sophia coloured deeply; I could not conjecture why; and off we set on our way down the mountain to Plas Newydd.

CHAPTER VII.

SCARLATT SUETT.

SHALL never forget that night, and I have ason to remember it.

The storm-clouds were now all dispersed, and e sky presented one immense concave of star-ewn, diamond-pure azure over our heads. e air was indescribably fresh, clear, and ght; it exhilarated like a draught of cham-ne. Hungry and faint as I was, I felt the

On the contrary, young Vivian's manner became singularly depressed; and sometimes I thought he looked at me with a cast of sadness and misgiving on his prematurely worn and expressive countenance.

The path through the wood which we had now entered, though very steep, was as smoothly kept and gravelled as the carriage-way before a house. There was nothing to hinder us from jogging on at a merry pace, save the incessant splash and dripple of the saturated boughs. We were proceeding at a good step, and had turned into a broad avenue of the finest beech and larch trees I have ever seen, when suddenly, a tramp of feet in a neighbouring copse, and Gelert's warning growl, induced us all to look in the direction of the sound.

Three or four figures were immediately visible, clambering with agility up a precipitous bank in the wood. The foremost were two gentlemen, one in black cloth, the other in a brown velvet shooting jacket, with large mother-of-pearl buttons: both had guns in their hands, and were attended by a gamekeeper and boy, with three or four setters.

"Stop! let us stop a moment or two, and

allow them to pass," said Vivian, suddenly halting, and laying his small, nervous hand on my arm. "It is Scarlatt Suett and his tutor, that rascally Reverend Carolus Luxmoor! They have been out shooting all day, for of the two the tutor is the idler and the fonder of all manner of racketing! So they are not always good company for ladies, after a day's sport, are they, Miss Sutcliffe?"

"I do not know, but I do not care for their company at any time," replied Sophia, pettishly. "So let us stop till they swagger on before us."

But the little baronet's plan was not destined to be carried out. Quietly as we stood, Gelert would not cease his growling; perhaps at the sight of the setters, which, on their part, contemplated him in evident surprise and fear.

"Hollo, what's that?" we heard one of the gentlemen exclaim, peering towards us in the gloom. "Poachers, by Jove, Luxmoor! Do you know, that arrogant little Ap Howel pretends to give all the lazy, skulking rascals in the country side leave to come loafing about our grounds, as if he and his old Kings of Glamorgan were lords of the ascendant still! I'm tired of the game, and will put a stop to it at once and

for all! Who's there? Stand and say who you are, or——" and we heard the click of the gun, as it was cocked in the dark, "at least, my fine fellows, I will put your dog out of serviceable condition!"

"Put down your gun, Mr. Scarlatt! For shame! Don't you see the petticoats? What the dickens are you at? Ware hen, I say! I can see them through my spectacles, green though they be! A pretty sportsman you'll turn out, after all my pains!" interposed the young gentleman's companion.

"A cockney one, Mr. Luxmoor, of course. And you are little better yourself, I should say, your bags seem quite empty?—But no one who is not born to it, is ever a good sportsman on the Welsh hills!" said our young guide, in tones in which the sneer was very distinct. "Why, Mr. Scarlatt," he continued, thus gibingly, "are you going to shoot your particular friend and acquaintance, Miss Sophia Sutcliffe? Well, do as you like, but mind what I say, I'll indict you at the next quarter sessions, for I have given no one leave, I am sure, to shoot *women* on my manors!"

"Beg pardon, Sir Vivian, I'm afraid I forgot

to ask leave even to shoot grouse on the Howel Mynydd, though I recollect now you are still lord of all the barren *upper crust!*" returned the first speaker. "But is that really you, Miss Sutcliffe? Sir Vivian is always so much on his stilts, that one can never tell whether his objects are distant or near."

"Yes, Mr. Suett, it is I," said Sophia, with considering the hints she had thrown out—some justifiable hastiness and peevishness, I thought, in her manner.

"I'll walk with you, then, to the house, shall ? or are you still in your charming tantrums?" aid the young gentleman.

"Or, what is more likely, afraid mamma will e on the look-out, as usual, from one of her azum-gazums," subjoined his fellow sportsman.

"You and your pupil have been making merry at some of the mountain cabarets, I presume, Mr. Luxmoor," said Sophia, turning, with an air of displeasure, from Scarlatt Suett to his companion.

This companion was a man probably verging on forty years of age; prematurely bald on the forehead, marked a good deal with the small pox, and wearing a pair of green spectacles.

He was not perhaps otherwise of a very tageous countenance: there was too muc leering levity of the satyr in it! Yet yo have said, a man of great natural and one accustomed to good society; and, when he chose—though the degrading vi enslaved him sometimes, certainly, put tionary action out of his power—Mr. L was of gentlemanly, and even fascinat meanour and conversation. His figu however, too short-set and plebeian; his chiselled, powerful head, and massy sh having rather a disproportionate effect nection with this inferior stature. Whe him, on this first occasion, he was dress suit of clerical black and white, in all but his equipment as a sportsman; to c which, he had unceremoniously tucked trousers to the top of his muddy boots.

"No, Miss Sutcliffe, upon my honor that you know is my Styx, when I att replied this person, but in rather admis laughing accents, to Sophia's observation

"That was an oath that bound the believe; but do you really think there

that would bind you, Mr. Luxmoor?" said Sophia, tartly.

"Try me, Miss Sutcliffe! that's all, and invent it yourself," returned the Reverend Carolus, in an unruffled, bantering tone.

"Meanwhile, I would thank you, Luxmoor," interposed young Mr. Suett, very sharply and authoritatively, "not to seem to give an affirmative—on my account, at least—to Miss Sutcliffe's bacchanalian insinuations! As if it was impossible to admire her without suspicion of losing out of one's senses! whereas, truth to say!" he added, in a manner that combined jollery with a degree of insulting and ironical challenge — "one ought to have one's wits pretty keenly about one, to do justice to Miss Sutcliffe's many charms without playing moth to their brilliant attraction! But who is this young damsel whom we are keeping shivering while we gabble, under the dripping boughs? Whom have you there, smuggled, you artful little Welshman? Why, Luxmoor, here is one of your youngest nymphs of Diana—if anything relating to that goddess ought to be mentioned in the same breath with your reverence!"

"I shall not look, Mr. Scarlatt. I have

played Actæon once before to my great dis
vantage," replied the Reverend Carolus, hum
ously covering his spectacles with his disengag
hand.

"Was not Actœon a married man? and
you not a bachelor, and fellow of a colle
Mr. Luxmoor?" said Vivian, drily. "B
really, Mr. Suett, your tutor, at all events,
not in a condition to talk much with ladies
night—and as this younger one is under
protection, I should thank you to let us pass."

"What a game chicken it is, isn't it, M
Scarlatt?" laughed Luxmoor.

"Oh, he's older than he looks! Fifteen
sixteen, aren't you, Sir Vivian? though y
look like a little shrivelled shrimp of ten
eleven," jeered Scarlatt.

"I shall take care that you know when I a
twenty-one, Mr. Suett! You need not trou
yourself about my age until then!" replied you
Ap Howel, with a significance not lost upon
opponent.

"When, I suppose, I shall have to ask yo
leave to shoot carrion-crows on the How
Mynydd? No! my dear Sir Vivian, I hope
that time to have secured enough *out* of t

Howel Mynydd to purchase myself a better-stocked property in some place where the loutish peasants will not imagine that because a fellow takes his name from a mountain, the mountain itself belongs to him for perpetuity!"

"We Howels gave our name to the mountain! Not the mountain its name to us!" returned the haughty lad.

"O Telamonian Ajax! I think you are fairly mthblustered, Mr. Suett!" said the tutor.

"Upon my faith, Mr. Luxmoor," returned e pupil offendedly, "I think the old woman's etheglin must have been very strong, after all."

"Then I am much mistaken," replied that uncitable personage, "for I felt as if I could have unk a barrel of it without its affording me the ghtest glimpse of the beatitude of intoxicaon!"

"This is my sister, Mr. Suett! Pray don't lk any more of your nonsense before these ildren!" interposed Sophia, evidently annoyed.

"Your sister! I thought you had no sister? No near relations?" said Scarlatt, glancing at me with more attention than he had hitherto bestowed.

"No *father*, no *brother*, Mr. Scarlatt! And

I thought it unnecessary to mention that I *ha*
sister whom I was bringing up, at my own
pense, to the same desirable profession !"

" She is a devilish pretty girl, then, Sop
your sister. By Jove ! a thousand times ha
somer than you are yourself !" returned
young man, as if anxious to pique Miss Sutcli
in return from something he did not relish
her last speech. Yet he fixed his eyes u
me with a sudden animation of expression ;
Mr. Luxmoor also turned a pair of star
spectacles upon me.

" Pray, Sir Vivian ap Howel !" Scarlatt
sumed, after a brief survey of my personal c
racteristics, in a very choleric and pick-qua
manner ; " what do you mean by saying th
am not in a fit condition to pay my respect
ladies ?"

" I spoke of your tutor, Mr. Scarlatt, wh
very boots bear testimony to the propriety of
remark. But if you take the observation
yourself, it will be a sign, no doubt, that I ou
to have extended it !" was the boy's undaun
reply.

" Then mark my words, Sir Vivian !—If
go on at this rate, I shall really be obliged s

day to forget that you are a descendant of Prince Billy-Goat the Great, and give you a sound thrashing to teach you manners!"

"You must make up your mind then for rather a sharp prick under the fifth rib, Mr. Suett, junior!" returned the boy. "I am not a match for you yet, in fair fight, I admit; but we mountaineers have managed to hold our own, nevertheless, under like disadvantages for some few centuries! And if your father has taken the beehive for his emblem, my ancestors have been hornets to men of your blood for ages before he set it down on the Mynydd Howel!"

"Yes, you Welshmen can *stab!* So when I take you into correction, I sha'n't forget to draw your sting first!" returned Mr. Scarlatt, disdainfully. "But I think I can prove to this young lady herself, at all events, that I am very respectable society for the sex, when they are as deserving of homage, in every sense, as I have no doubt Miss Sutcliffe's sister must be! Will you accept my arm to Plas Newydd, young lady; where I think I have more influence than your present escort, to procure you a favourable welcome?"

"I don't want to be welcomed to Plas Newydd!" was my rather churlish and pettish reply.

"And take care, Mr. Scarlatt! the dog not too well pleased with you!" said Sir Vivia hearing this reply with evident satisfaction. An indeed Gelert had been for some time circulatin round and round me, keeping up a menacin growl, and assuredly awaiting but the slighte gesture from me to have rushed into battle, wit any or all, of the strangers before him.

"What on earth does this huge beast mea by glaring so at me?" said Scarlatt, in a tone some real alarm. "Is it some new ungovernab importation of yours, Sir Vivian? Some tru decendant, like yourself, from the savage ol British blood? If so, I advise you to make th fellow keep the peace, tongue and tail, and once, or you will find that whether Mr. Luxmoor aim be unsteadied by a wash of fermented broon water, or no, *I* am quite able to put a bull through an object of this growling gentleman size—though it is pretty dark, too!"

And the irritated young man levelled his pie at Gelert.

"Don't, sir! Pray don't kill my dog! Yo shall not, unless you shoot me first!" were th words with which I now interposed, alarmed b

this threat, and advancing boldly before my faithful attendant.

This movement brought me within a few steps of the young sportsman; and we stood face to face, surveying one another for some moments, with excited and eager attention. My first direct confrontation with Scarlatt Suett might thus be said to be a hostile one—the true instinct doubtless of our opposed natures! Would it had been the emblem in all things of our destiny!

At that period Scarlatt was a very young man; probably in his twenty-first or second year. And though it be a poor excuse to allege for an infatuation so complete and overmastering as mine was destined to be, certainly it may be said in my apology, that he whom I was destined to love so passionately, and so undeservedly, was in all outward respects one of the handsomest men of his time. Not indeed in the style of personal comliness usually denominated *aristocratic;* but in the very perfection of the powerful and probably finally supreme over all other, Anglo-Saxon type.

Scarlatt Suett was tall; of a form eminently manly, energetic, and commanding; and, at

that period, with nothing of a vulgar massiveness in the muscular and compact build of his vigorous frame. There was a spring in his tread at once self-confident and expressive of an alert and eager character. His face was cast in a full, well-defined, and very handsome mould, as regarded the features, though there certainly was always something of a challenging and supercilious expression on them, that rather roused, while it defied hostility, on the first survey. His lips, indeed, were a little too widely cut, and the upper one was long in proportion to the rest of his features. But they revealed two rows of extraordinarily white and shapely teeth; while the bright rosy fairness of his complexion, the hue of his light chestnut brown hair, golden at the beard and whiskers—which latter hirsute ornament he already cultivated in profusion: the smiling audacity of his clear, steel-blue eyes—attested the purity of that energetic blood in his veins, from which have sprung the principal achievers of the miracles of modern civilisation.

Who could have believed in the remorseless egotism, the all-grasping selfishness, the littleness, the vanity, the credulity, the baseness of a being

thus nobly endowed with all the external attributes of an elevated and imperial nature? One also gifted with no common share of the mental qualities that form men, at all events, for the conquest and subjugation of their fellows, by superiority in the powers of will, and in a determined exertion of the faculties towards particular objects and ends?

For my part, looking at him fixedly, in mingled dread and defiance—even to my girlish notions, this young man appeared as an embodiment of his strenuous and active sex, before which all that was feminine and admirative in my own stood rebuked. My eyes sunk as his keen gaze perused me, half laughingly, yet with a mixture of hostility and doubt in it; which faded away the moment he perceived in my faltering looks the signs of victory and ascendancy on his own part.

He put the muzzle of his gun to the ground.

"Oh, if the dog is a young lady's pet!" he said, relaxing from his menacing attitude. "And such a pretty young lady's, too—for she don't seem at all like a female pedagogue, nursery or adult, my dear Miss Sutcliffe!—it is quite a different matter, of course! This

big fellow don't look much like one, certainl —though I ought not to depreciate muscle an thew! Rather a strange attendant for you sister, on a visit to the mountains, is it no Miss Sutcliffe?" he concluded, glancing good humoredly, though evidently perplexed, fro her to me, and from me to her again.

"'Tis a stray dog from some neighbourin gentleman's, that has taken a singular fancy t follow my sister from the cars! It will b claimed, I suppose, in a few days; and, mean while, any one may see it is a very valuabl animal—and Sir Vivian has taken charge o it!" said Sophia, quite coolly.

It struck me unpleasantly, even at that time to hear with what perfect indifference and com posure she could invent and utter falsehood like this. But then, and for long afterwards Sophia could not do wrong in my eyes! Al this ingenuity and effrontery of misstatemen appeared to me only spots in the ermine's, no the leopard's, skin!

"Do you expect a reward to be offered fo the dog, Sir Vivian?" resumed Scarlatt, turning then with a smiling sneer, as if desirous to pro voke, on young Ap Howel.

"When one is offered, I know where it will be most acceptable, Mr. Suett! The Ap Howels have always extended a free hospitality where they gave it at all! It is for tradesmen and hucksters in wool and iron, to barter the shelter they afford—since everything is to be bought and sold with them!" was the boy's sharp retort.

"I have heard, however, that one of your wild ancestors did rather worse than charge his guest for a night's lodging, in the old ruin up yonder!" replied Scarlatt.

"Wrong is the father of wrong; and their grandchildren are a thousand!" said young Vivian, translating a Welsh proverb, for the benefit of his English hearers.

"Well! we will not bring very heavy expenses against Miss Sutcliffe's sister at Plas Newydd," returned Scarlatt, carelessly. "Come, Luxmoor," he continued, in a sprightly manner, "you used to be proud to display your gallantry to Miss Sutcliffe. Brush it up for use again this evening, tired and wet, inside and outside, as you are said to be! Give your arm to the fascinating Sophia, Mr. Luxmoor, while I offer mine to her very charming young sister, who,

perhaps, does not place such a high price on the smallest indulgence of the sort—and who is welcome to Plas Newydd, for her own sake, as well as for her fair relative's!"

And with an easy but imperious action, which I could not readily avoid, Scarlatt Suett drew my hand in his disengaged arm, gave his gun to the servant, and turned away to head the party with me, apparently conscious of a most indisputable right to follow his own will and pleasure in the arrangement. But, at this moment, my eye fell upon Vivian, and I perceived that he was looking at me with a tremor pervading his whole sensitive frame, and an earnestness of deprecation in his look that immediately induced me to attempt to withdraw my hand. The effort failed. I felt it at once seized and retained in Scarlatt's wiry knit grasp, with an exultant "No, indeed!" I looked appealingly at Sophia — who at first seemed inclined to interfere. But after a moment's pause of reflection—which perhaps decided the destiny of my life!—"You are honoured, Helena, dear," she said; "pray go on with Mr. Scarlatt now, for I feel we are both in all likelihood catching a severe cold, standing in the wind and weather here."

On we went. At some slight interval the Reverend Carolus and Sophia followed in our wake, but not arm-in-arm. Vivian seemed to linger much more remotely—stopping apparently to knot his handkerchief round Gelert's throat, and sternly restraining him from hastening in my steps. It was amazing how docile already the powerful creature had become under his influence.

All the rest of the way to the house—and it was some minutes yet before we entered the pleasure domain round Plas Newydd—my companion amused himself in stringing together a succession of compliments and fine speeches,—not altogether commonplaces of admiration, from one of his sex towards one of mine, so much his junior—for he had evidently made language his study, and had a flow of poetically-coloured expressions at his command that might have dazzled any novice. But I was, on my part, pretty well read in a superior class of literature to that whence Scarlatt drew these flourishes, and had in fact acquired a taste for a more exalted and rational style of conversation. Then he seemed to think no restraint was necessary with a female of my rank; that the inferiority of my condition rendered every im-

pertinence allowable—and that he might say, without scruple, whatever nonsense came into his head.

Instead of being flattered, I was irritated. I speedily let him understand his mistake in the matter. I was a very young girl indeed; but I was full of a native fire and spirit. The habit of reading, in which I had indulged, had given an unusual energy and vivacity of expression to my language. I answered Scarlatt Suett's condescending gallantries with a sparkle of disdain and petulance, that evidently both surprised and diverted him.

"You are by no means such a *sweet, submissive* temper as your sister—who is not merely honey but treacle—in which one's legs are very liable to get *clagged*—as my father would say, in his Lancashire dialect, which he has not even yet managed to wean himself from," he said, evidently with some asperity: but after glancing over his shoulder, and perceiving that we had left Sophia and his tutor at a considerable distance behind—"Frankly speaking, however, I like you the better for it. *I love to force things to do my will against their own!* That is why I tease

that untameable young hyena, Ap Howel, so! He is a real representative of the Celtic race, and I of the Anglo-Saxon—and you know *we* are improving him and his off the face of the earth! But you don't seem of the conquering blood quite, either: I suppose you must be said to look too *thoroughbred* to be one of us!—I am sure you can only be Sophia Sutcliffe's half-sister, any way?"

"We had not the same mother," I thought it best to answer.

"I thought not!—and I suppose yours came of a more *aristocratic* set, as they call it? Superfine, worn-out blood that ends in females, or in little starveling mannikins like that Ap Howel! But you are a very beautiful creature yourself—and I think, after all, I prefer that clear, glowing, Spanish donna-looking brunette complexion of yours, to any of the lighter ones! Your sister's is pretty good in its way: but what a cunning, wily, able creature she is! How ever came you to be so frank and open-hearted, and she such a sphinx of craft and delusion?"

"I don't know what you mean, sir," I answered, angrily. "But I believe you all talk

against Sophia here because you are incapabl of appreciating her as she deserves to be appre ciated—and I am very glad that she is going t leave you soon."

"And so am I—I am tired of her cantrips But I hope she has not had you over merel to help her cord her trunks?—For do yo know," my companion said, with animation "that I never saw any young creature I like so well before? I begin to believe in love a first sight—as your sister, I am sure, does !— for even that ugly man-goat, Luxmoor—woul you believe it," he broke off, laughing, "tha before Luxmoor came to be my tutor, I ha reason to flatter myself, I was making quit progress in Miss Sutcliffe's good graces—all i the most innocent way in the world, of course —when she took quite a sudden fancy to hir instead? But, still, perhaps, she is only playin him off against me, thinking to force me to— to turn my nonsense into earnest, and sit dow to a humdrum, contented life, with a commor place wife and children, and a counting house — a model member of the 'middl classes!'"

"I am sure my sister does not want any o

to admire her, who thinks her beneath him, in any respect," I said, indignantly.

"Well, and I want a wife to raise me—not a wife whom I must raise. That is, one with birth and connexions, to give me a fair start in the aristocratic and political world: I will do the rest myself," replied the young man, in a singularly confidential style; but perhaps he wished me to report what I heard to my *sister!*

"A little amusement meanwhile is all very well—and I own your sister has understanding enough to push a man very fast up the hill in any other country than England. But here—whatever my father may say—a man must be at least allied to the aristocracy, in one way or other, to hope to rise to any high political elevation. How is it with my father himself? Clever, bustling, courageous, indomitable, as he is? Why, he cannot even obtain a beggarly knighthood from the Whigs, whom he has served with his vote ever since he entered parliament, because, forsooth, they give themselves out to be the liberal party! And now the very mob that raised him, out of sheer defiance and hatred of the insolent domination of the Pomeroys, think they have done too much for him—

elevated him too high above themselves, fr
whom he sprang, and whose level he oug
consequently to keep. Then there's my moth
— an excellent woman, a very sharp-witt
clever, bustling woman—but she is one of t
weights that keep him to the ground! N
wherever a man marries nowadays—it used
be the case only with women—he fixes his leve
And the only excuse," he concluded, abrupt
"for a fellow to do such an act of madn
with his eyes open—which mine are—as
marry a person in his own rank in life, when
means to soar to the clouds above it, would
—beauty such as I see before me!"

It was the first time I had listened to acce
of admiration—the first time I had encounte
its glance—from any one of the sex privileg
to take the initiative in such demonstrations.
glanced at Scarlatt as he spoke these wor
Girl as I was, I could not but bend somew
to the sway of haughty and energetic aspirati
in that knit and powerful frame. Even the s
confidence, amounting to superciliousness
others, in his expressions, had in it much t
was attractive to a girl of a proud, unmaste
temperament like mine. A confused, but

toxicating and bewildering sentiment entered my heart. It seemed to me that I was no longer tired—spent; that I could have endured to walk much farther than there was likely to be occasion, listening to these strange, masculine revelations of feelings and purposes so unlike all I had been accustomed to.

But we were now arrived in the gardens of Plas Newydd, immediately surrounding the house. They were formed in a succession of terraces along the side of the mountain, sheltered from the visitation of its bitter winds by high hedges of thorn and hornbeam, and in parts traversing the brink of the precipices down which rolled the headlong course of the Rhaiadr Dhu. The mansion itself now appeared; dense woods behind, and a glorious flower-garden before it. It was a sensible-looking structure, but not at all remarkable for architectural beauty. It was of no particular style of architecture, in fact, at all, I should imagine; but it had an air of solidity and comfort that adapted it both to its exposed situation and uses. It consisted principally of a large, square mass of grey or light-blue stone, with receding semicircular wings that concealed the domestic offices and stables,

and enclosed extensive kitchen gardens orchards. But it was finished at all points the most substantial care; and the winc in particular, were large, and glazed with p of a size and brilliant transparency to whic were little accustomed in the antique and gl pile of Mauleverer Castle.

"This is Plas Newydd," said my condu pausing—adding playfully, "and I am its apparent—though, unluckily for me, we m and manufacturers own no law of primo ture; and I have two little humpty-dumpty brothers, besides a sister, whom they mus after a woman of the Ap Howel ancestry,— if all tales be true, was not in the least b than she should be! But my father and th Howels were wonderful friends, in the tim the last extravagant fellows of the name, verily sold their birthright for a mess of pot However, it was quite useless to them; had neither sense nor money to make mines productive again, after the great expl and falling in of the mountain, half a cer ago. This is Plas Newydd; for we canno the obstinate clodpates about here to call any other name. Yet now I own I would

with half its worth to be able to call it—and get others to call it, which is the difficulty—anything that would have half the power over the imagination of the name yonder proud little beggar's heap of ruin enjoys, in spite of almost complete decay!—Castell Ap Howel, forsooth, I suppose, it will be as long as a stone of the foundation, overgrown with weeds, remains to say that there it stood."

"Oh, I like this nice, clean, new house much better than any old castle; old castles are so full of dark, dismal rooms and passages," I said, with reminiscences of Mauleverer returning by no means pleasantly upon me.

"Well, now," Scarlatt resumed, but speaking evidently rather to himself than to me, "I wonder whether, after all, it would not be the wiser and happier plan for me to sit down contented with destiny? If even I *could* thrust my nasty tallow-chandler name into the peerage, would it not seem ridiculous there? And what a world of toil and trouble would one have to go through to attain to be 'My Lord' at last, with grey hairs and rheumy eyes...and perhaps be obliged to solace myself as one of the penalties with the

society of some eldest and ugliest Lady Mary of a political aristocrat's brood of daughters."

I do not know what foolish, girlish impulse prompted me—what inexplicable mixture of romantic, childish coquetry and secret consciousness of power; but I replied, with a girlish simplicity of gaiety—to this diatribe, "Would younot be glad, then, if I were some fairy?—some Cinderella, who had stolen her aunt's wand that turned pumpkins into coaches with a stroke that I might make you a highborn, princely gentleman at once?"

"That would be impossible, my bright young loveliness! But if I were not a craving, unsubstantial fool, you might perhaps make me a very happy man!" replied Scarlatt, joyously: and pausing, he turned to me with an expression which I do not like to recall, though it was fraught with the liveliest admiration, and even with something nigh akin to passion—not of a elevated order, however—and continued. "And you, I should say, are not such a selfish, engrossing creature as your sister, who would pretend to love a man to distraction, and yet require of him the sacrifice of all his prospects and hopes to her own ambitious fancies? You are your

self, I am sure, of too proud and superior a character to put any stress on becoming a *Mrs. Suett, junior*, before you would deign to share the existence, and whatever else he has besides to call his own, of the man whom you might honor with a preference? Tell me, my sweet creature, is it not so? and Sophia and Luxmoor may make it up as soon as they like, and go to the devil together, hand in hand!"

I was so surprised and confused at what I heard, that I made no reply. But continuing to look at him in surprise and question, on a sudden, the young man, yielding, as it seemed, to an irresistible impulse, folded me in his arms, and the first kiss I had received from any of his sex but my father, glowed with strange passion on my lips.

Nothing could exceed my indignation on finding myself the subject of a familiarity so completely unlicensed and audacious as I had every reason to consider this! I am afraid, however, that my demeanour was but little more dignified and awe-striking, than if I had been in reality the country lass whose habiliments I wore. I slapped Scarlatt's bright-complexioned cheek till it grew of a still more brilliant hue,

and calling "Gelert, Gelert!" in my indignation and alarm, I attempted to break away from him and run to Sophia, whom I now perceived at the end of the walk we had traversed—unconsciously to me—at a pace that left her and Luxmoor pretty far behind.

He held me, however, pretty firmly, with both my hands in his own, and was laughingly apologising and attempting to soothe me, when this loitering pair arrived.

The Reverend Carolus leered at us with the comprehension and enjoyment of his forest prototype, peering through the green leaves on a nymph of Diana, astray with some mortal love.

But Sophia seemed considerably disturbed—indeed, irritated at the spectacle that afforded her companion so much satisfaction. "I was right after all, and you have been joining your worthy tutor in a pottle-deep potation, Mr. Scarlatt," she said, snatching me away from him with some violence. "But at best, of all the young men whom it has been my fortune to encounter, you are the one that has the least idea of the respect due to your mother's sex! Do you wish to do my sister as much harm as your

folly has already done to me, and destroy all chance of her pleasing Mrs. Suett as a nursery governess to your little sister? So badly off as we both are, too!—And you know that malicious boy is coming on after us, who will be sure to carry word of all he sees, and hears, and can imagine, in his crafty little brain!"

Luxmoor gave one of his disgusting, sneering grins, while Scarlatt Suett's eye ranged past our group, with a very vindictive expression, as if in search of the person alluded to. But Vivian nowhere appeared.

"I will wring his little bantam neck if he dares to carry tales about me! But, after all, what can he say? It is not the first time since the creation that a pretty girl has been kissed—and by a pretty fellow, too! Though it is not usual for them to be so angry and cry so, darling little soul!" he continued, seeming astonished at my unabated fret of indignation. "Well, Miss Sutcliffe, do excuse me, and get this sweet young creature, your sister, to forgive me. I own that either the metheglin has got into my head, or else I am drunk with something infinitely more intoxicating than the richest wines! And do you really hold out such a delightful

prospect, as that this young Hebe, newly alighted from a rainbow, will remain among us?"

"If you are pleased to exert your influence with your mother in her favour, Mr. Scarlatt," said Sophia, smilingly.

"Oh, if it depends on that—we shall see!"

CHAPTER VIII.

A FEMALE ASMODEUS.

SUCH was my first interview with Scarlatt Suett; and such were probably, for many a day, the only glimpses into the realities of his character I was permitted to take.

These left on my mind a strong, and, on the whole, unfavourable and resentful impression. My dignity had received a shock. I felt humbled by what I considered, making no allowances for the metamorphosis I had myself effected in my external environments, a grievous insult to a young lady of my rank and position. Had not the night become so fearfully dark—had not the locality abounded in such varied dangers and terrors—not even Sophia's influence could

have availed to prevent me from continuing my flight from Plas Newydd altogether. As it was, I took no farther part in the conversation, but observed a disdainful silence until we reached a point where she and my new acquaintance seemed to think it advisable to part company. This was before a finely-wrought iron gate, admitting into a shrubbery a little below the house. Scarlatt Suett, apparently rather amused than otherwise, at my continued pettishness, renewed his efforts to conciliate me before we parted, but without success. Sophia said he looked long after us as we proceeded to one of the back entrances of the house.

On our way she inquired—with real anxiety no doubt—whether Mr. Suett had asked me any questions that might have compromised the secrecy we had resolved on endeavouring, if possible, to preserve? I could answer truly in the negative. Scarlatt's motive in making seizure of me, in the first instance, was probably the mere impulse of his strong self-will and assertion of supremacy over all that approached Plas Newydd. But his interest in me grew apace; and he had apparently remained so absorbed in personal impressions, that he had

not thought of questioning me on any of the particulars of my arrival, except to ask if I had been out in the storm, in which he declared he himself and his tutor had been nearly drowned on dry land! Perhaps he took it for granted that, as Sophia's sister, my antecedents resembled her's—which he doubtless imagined were fully known to him.

"Well, then, dearest Miss Pomeroy," said Sophia, then, with a subtle smile, "you enjoy what very few women—(women, I say, though you are little more than a child in years)—of your rank and splendid expectations, however beautiful and engaging themselves, can ever pretend to. The certainty of having effected a disinterested and really personal conquest! I never saw any creature of his species so suddenly captivated and enthralled as this young man; and the actual delirium in which he seemed plunged, is the only excuse for his very impertinent conduct! Unless to be poor and needy, as the sister of Sophia Sutcliffe must, of course, be supposed, authorises every form of insult, either of superfluous attention or neglect. Well, seeing what a changeable, libertine creature the man is, I own I am rather gratified to think

what a rebuff he will experience in his turn when the discovery of your name and station shows him that any hopes he might THEN form, of a legitimate character, are as far above his reach as he probably now thinks any such would be below his own magnificently exalted aspirations."

There was more in this speech calculated to sway and direct my opinions, than perhaps appears on the surface. It infused into me, for the first time, the painful notion that, wherever my birth and connexions were known, I ran the risk of becoming an object of mercenary and interested views, and of them only. It gave me the first thrilling sensation that reacts in the hearts of women from the consciousness of having inspired a passionate emotion in a person of the opposite sex; one so handsome and highly endowed in all personal respects as Scarlatt Suett seemed too! It furnished a flattering apology for an act that had wounded my proud self-estimate! while, finally, the satisfaction with which Sophia anticipated my new admirer's mortification, in the discovery of the hopelessness of all this sudden and sincere attachment could scarcely be expected to find an echo in

my bosom. It might be that I even felt some imperceptible, secret movement of revolt against my friend's vindictive feeling, and a vague, not altogether unpleasant conviction, that my triumph inspired her with a sentiment of jealousy. It is in vain to deny it. The youngest girl has in her all the germs of the woman; and Scarlatt Suett's attentions had already awakened in me some consciousness of the subtle spirit of rivalry pervading our sex in their general relation to the opposite one.

Nothing more was said at the time. We made our way to the house, and entered at a back door. I remember, Sophia was scarcely treated with civility by the housekeeper, whom we met;—a Mrs. Ruddles—a great, fat, fair Cheshire woman, whom she requested, in a very subdued manner, to allow herself and sister some refreshment in her apartment. Mrs. Ruddles, I afterwards found, shared the suspicions and ill-will of her mistress, against a person who was believed to have a design on the eldest son and hope of Plas Newydd. She stared in very visible surprise and curiosity at me, but only gave me a dry and unwelcome assent.

We had hardly, however, sat down in
fireless room, somewhat dubiously expecting
arrival of the tea and bread and butter we
requested,—I, on my part, laughing at Sophi
rueful apologies,—when a tap was heard at
door. She opened it, and there stood
Scarlatt Suett's private page, with a silver tr
on which was a decanter of one of the b
wines in the Plas Newydd cellars, and a selecti
of the choicest biscuits from his mother's stor
The page had also instructions to light us
fire; and these attentions were followed up
a profuse supper-tray of the most appetizi
contents of the larder, direct from the table
the young gentleman and his tutor at their l
dinner.

Scarlatt took this plan in order not to exc
his mother or the housekeeper's notice. So s
Sophia, rather peevishly complimenting me
what she declared must be the effects of
charms! I was hungry and faint; and I o
I appreciated the cordial influence of the r
canary, and partook of the excellent viands, w
a satisfaction not alloyed by the inference.
even felt, perhaps, superfluously grateful
these material attentions, and rather vain of

superiority of my sudden ascendancy, when Mrs. Ruddle's grudging and reluctant tray of weak hyson, and plain, thick-sliced bread and butter, arrived, as a mere complement to our previous repast.

All the time our meal lasted, Sophia kept me very well entertained. She gave me a sketch of the interior economy of the Plas Newydd household, and of the persons composing it that interested me.

I was pleased to find that, although she had reason, according to what she stated in the first instance, to complain of her own personal treatment at Plas Newydd, she spoke in the most forbearing, and even kindly terms, of its principal occupants. I ought to have noticed the change in her tone, under the influence of the new idea she had suddenly conceived, or which had been instilled into her! But I had no habits of metaphysical observation or analysis to suggest the scrutiny or guide it.

She did not blame Mrs. Suett, she now indulgently declared, for endeavouring to get rid of her, even rather unceremoniously, since she had taken the notion that her son's attentions were directed towards her.

"It is a mere caprice, however; a young man fancy for the first tolerable-looking young woma that is thrown much in his way—since the pros pect of losing me for ever afflicts him so ver little, and he can so readily transfer his favour! said Sophia; but I thought, not quite as if sh relished the fact. "Still, one must allow, th bare possibility of anything serious in the matte was enough to irritate an ambitious mother lik Mrs. Suett!—How I shall enjoy her dismay, i she accepts you in the belief that your extrem youth is a security, to see Scarlatt going o really on a passion she will consider quite a *infra dig.*, of course, as one for me, and infinitel more formidable, considering how beautiful yo are! It is no wonder!" Sophia continued, wit a warmth of appreciation that somehow did no quite please me. "Mr. Scarlatt is certainly on of the handsomest young men in England, an he is possessed of great—of extraordinary— abilities! There is nothing to prevent him fron becoming one of the foremost men of the age He has ambition to aspire to the loftiest positio as a politician, and talents to achieve whatever he aspires to. Not only has he the soaring ken but the broad, sustaining pinions of the eagle

you know, dear! Luxmoor, who is himself a man of first-rate intellect and knowledge of the world—a senior wrangler of his university—though a very worthless character in other respects, I think,—declares that his pupil will some day be Prime Minister of England, if he has but the commonest fortune to back his talents and industry! He has already, to my knowledge, displayed the most remarkable courage and resolution in dispersing a mob of the miners in the strike last winter—though young Ap Howel pretends, because he can speak Welsh to them, that he induced them to go quietly back to their homes—when they came up to Plas Newydd, bent, certainly, on all kinds of mischief. Then he has carefully trained himself in every accomplishment that befits a gentleman. He is a noble horseman; he dances to admiration; fences and shoots like a prince—and, above all, scorns to play on any musical instrument! That little Ap Howel thinks himself the gentleman *par excellence*, yet is always at work in his ruined tower, twanging at a Welsh harp, with two or three strings, that makes such a doleful, wild, banshee-like wailing, I daresay it was the wind

stirring it made you fancy you heard his stu torrent *ghostess* at her yellings!"

Sophia evidently wished to dispel any supe stitious inferences I might have been dispos to draw from such a reception among th spiritual denizens of the Howel Mynydd!

She told me further, that young Suett pos sessed in a remarkable degree that high, intuitiv sense of a lofty destiny often observed in th youth of men whose genius marks them ou for ascendancy over their fellows! It was thi that gave him, with such as were not acquainte with his peculiarities, a first effect of pride an domineering assumption in the tone of his man ners, very alien to his natural character. Hi father himself understood him no more tha the cock scratching on the dunghill, that foun a pearl, understood its prize! He was a ma of exclusively mercantile talent—a very kin good man certainly, in his way—but one wh placed stress on the possession of no gifts tha had not a money-making and practical tendenc He wished his son to take up with his own bus ness, as an ore master, and proprietor of co mines. But, however tempting, in a pecuniar sense, his father's offers of partnership must b

Scarlatt steadily refused all such overtures, and was now completing his education at Cambridge, with an exclusive view to a career of political elevation. And though, at present, the father continued somewhat opposed to the plan, he would finally be brought over to support him in all his views; though a necessary preliminary was the transfer of his own seat in parliament to his son!

The young man's influence, Sophia said, was already paramount in the house, by the mere force of his energetic character and will. But he was besides supported in everything by his mother, who adored her son, and possessed more than a wife's fair share of sway over her busy and goodnatured spouse.

Mrs. Suett, herself, was not a woman of first-rate education, certainly! But she was endowed with remarkably good natural abilities, and was as convinced as her son of the proud destinies in store for one who was as much the favourite of nature as of her own fond mother's heart!

Moreover, her husband's political career was confessedly a failure: a political failure, Sophia defining to me to mean an inability to procure a title from a minister! On this the elder Suett

—though no doubt thought, at Maulev
person of absurdly strong democratic opini
had set his heart for a long period, without
able to attain his object. He had aspirec
baronetcy,—which was not granted at l
quest! So that of late he had become e
ingly disgusted with the niggardly behavi
the party he had always served; and
thought it needed very little to change th
Suett himself into almost as good a Tory
father. As to Scarlatt Suett, since the ag
on the Corn Laws had commenced, thou
family possessed scarcely an acre of land,
openly avowed himself of Conservative pri
on the subject.

Neither, it appeared, did the elder Suet
much ambition to shine in the more el
spheres of political action. He spoke ver
in the House, and then only on questions
connected with his own pursuits. But o
occasions, his opinions, a little wordy p
and ungrammatical in expression, but res
the soundest experience, were always list
with great respect. He was himself quit
scious of certain defects of early position,
it was too late in the day for him to r

Though he was a man of the most vigorous independence and boldness of mind, he admitted that the mysterious awe of that great assemblage of the British Commons had proved too much even for him! His constituents latterly complained a good deal of his silence in the House, and thus suggested, less offensively, but more emphatically than a son could have dared, the propriety of yielding the channel offered by their representation, for the onward movement of the younger man's career! The elder Suett had sufficient employment, moreover, and one in fact that absorbed all his best energies, in the care of the immense wealth he had already accumulated, and in endeavours still to increase it.

In all other respects the father was a man of the plainest and most unpretending manners and ideas! He took rather an unreasonable delight, certainly, in humbling and thwarting what he considered aristocratic pride and overbearingness in every form. But it was a spirit of John Bull self-assertion and bravery, rather than any personal pique against my father, that had induced him to offer himself in the memorable contest ending in the defeat of the latter!

For Sophia had often heard him, in an indi
way, lament that he should be on such bad te
with his noble neighbour, and confess regre
having deprived the country of the abilities
man so much better able than himself to s
it in the higher walks of political action.
was this feeling, more than shared by Mrs. S
that induced her to receive my mother's rec
mendation of a governess into her family
implicitly. And she was deeply mortified
find the exchange of intercourse was limite
the epistolary form. Moreover, Sophia decl
she thought Mrs. Suett had volunteered
handsome a salary for her services, chiefly
a view to impress Lady Mauleverer with a no
of the family wealth and liberality.

So far was the older Suett, however, from
kind of parvenu affectation, that he openly
claimed himself the son of his own works,
took pleasure in exaggerating the lowlines
his descent. His father had been a comme
representative of some great mining estab
ment in the north of England, and it w
favourite diversion with him to horrify his fa
by declaring that he had been a *collier!*
cause he was brought up at a foundation sch

he made a public boast that he was originally a *charity boy*. He had even the *true democratic spirit* to introduce these circumstances as claims on popular regard on the hustings, at the time he defeated my father! But Sophia said, with a satirical smile, she had no doubt this seeming excess of democratic feeling was really stirred by the difficulty the Suetts found in instating themselves on any terms of equality in the ranks of the aristocracy! And the father of the race was not satisfied even with the high consideration his successful speculations procured for him among all sensible people.

"He would not mind what he did, or *gave*," Sophia observed, with rather bitter emphasis, "if he could contrive the means to introduce his family by *marriage* into the families of the ancient gentry and proprietors of the county! He could easily achieve this with his money: but he was generous at the same time in his views! He was training up the impoverished heir of the Ap Howels, expressly on the notion of an alliance between him and his daughter, Bronwen. And he would confer a fortune with the latter, ample to restore that ancient name to much of its former consideration."

Reverting to Mrs. Suett, Sophia again expressed her regret that her sharp wit and excellent understanding had not received the advantages of early discipline. I do not now doubt that she was preparing me not to receive too sudden and distasteful impressions from the peculiar style of conversation and demeanour of a personage whom she already destined as my future *mother-in-law*. And, in reality, though Mrs. Suett was (I speak of those whom I have known in the past, not because they are so themselves, but because I am so to them)—though Mrs. Suett was a woman of remarkable vivacity of understanding, to guide her very energetic selfishness, it was not difficult for any one of my training to perceive she was of very inferior breeding, which had not corrected the plebeian vein of insolence and coarseness running through all the brighter inlay of her aspiring and active character.

Such were the Suetts—father, mother, and eldest son, according to the candid and seemingly disinterested report of my friend, Sophia Sutcliffe. The rest of the family consisted of two little boys, twins, still almost in a state of infancy, and of her pupil, Bronwen.

Sophia seemed to like this child very much; perhaps, aware of my peculiar temperament, with a view to stimulate my own affection for her by a species of rivalry there, too! She was a sweet-tempered, docile, extremely pretty child, she said; perhaps a little too quiet and reserved for her age! But unfortunately Mrs. Suett had her own notions of aristocratic education, and wanted her daughter, above all things, to be brought up as a fine lady! Now her ideal of a fine lady coincided very much with my father's—and was, that the victim should be little better than a statue, endowed with some locomotive power, and capable of going through a series of automaton manœuvres, dignified by the name of accomplishments!

Poor little Bronwen was disciplined on this model, in spite of Sophia's more rational remonstrances. "And Mrs. Suett is taking hereby the most mistaken way possible to bring about one of her grand objects—the union of her child with that young beggar chieftain of the Ap Howels! There is nothing that little catamountain hates more than the artificial in every form! And he has a wonderful talent, for such a mere boy, of detecting the unreal in

all its most elaborate efforts of putting the char on the world!"

Sophia flushed angrily as she uttered th words; she scarcely ever indeed spoke of Viv Ap Howel, without some expression of disli His scrutiny had been to her from the first touch of Ithuriel's spear!

Yet it was always as evident that she hac considerable degree of respect for him and e fear of him! Boy as he was, it was plain t she looked upon Ap Howel as a power at l Newydd, and one in a state of hostility, o best, of negation to her own! For she als apart as her position in that household mi seem—had become a power in it, by the f of her dangerous qualities of mind and eve person! Of person! I was destined yet learn that Sophia possessed a faculty nigh s to the powers of transformation of the witche old, and could at pleasure change almost character of her physiognomy and the effec her general appearance, by an indescrib infusion of charm and fascination she had command, in the infinite resources of her and cajolery! Surely, she possessed in he the secret of the maddening oriental drug wl

bestows on its votaries all the charms of the most voluptuous existence, in exchange for reason and actuality!

Vivian, according to her, was of the most obstinate and wayward disposition in the world—possibly even touched with a little insanity! "All your fine, noble, rich *old* blood is, you know," she said, with *her* smile. Feeble as his constitution was, much as he suffered in health in consequence, he persisted in habituating himself to every species of strenuous physical action and exposure. He had taken a fancy to make a soldier of himself, in spite of an acute nervous sensibility that, in Sophia's opinion, rendered him almost like a person without a skin! His father was slain in battle—yet this seemed one principal inducement for the preference he had formed. His late grandfather and his guardian, the elder Mr. Suett, wished to bring him up to the church. Ample provision was assured him in it. Almost the last vestige of the ancient family wealth of the Ap Howels consisted in the advowson of a considerable living in the county, which had almost always been enjoyed by some member of the family. There were probabilities that the gift would fall in about the time when

Vivian might have qualified himself to accept it. But he would not hear of the project; and as the Suetts made it a point to soothe his irascible disposition as much as possible, he was now educating at Eton, with a view to the purchase of a commission, which would probably exhaust his little patrimony.

"And the strange boy persists he will only go into one of the working regiments—among the fighting fellows, as he calls them! No mere Waterloo chances of getting his brains knocked out, in the Guards, for him! And yet he has been obliged to come home from Eton before the vacation, by order of the doctors, for having nearly got himself prematurely killed in a mere boxing-match with a boy—two or three times his own size, though, I believe!"

The least Sophia's favourite among all the denizens of Plas Newydd, her opinions on whom she communicated to me during our long talk that night, was the Reverend Carolus Luxmore. For this gentleman (whom I myself from the first took into antipathy) she gave now some reasons of her own dislike. If Scarlatt Suett had any really dangerous faults—if he had been stimulated in the formation of profligate designs

on herself, by aught but the natural movement of *his* age or ardent passions, it was by that wicked *tutor*! Luxmoor was undeniably, she said, a man of very first-rate intellect. His position at his university attested his attainments as a scholar. "But he was one of the most worthless," Sophia pronounced, with vehemence, "of his whole worthless sex!" His talents would never be of the slightest service in advancing him in the world, she said; they were so neutralized by his habits of pleasure and of excess! He was a sworn sensualist, indeed, in every form; looked upon women as mere objects of emotions shared by man with the lowest brutes; and, to crown all—whenever not restrained by absolute physical impossibility, as among those sober and remote hills—was a drunkard of the most insatiable order! *He had no more religion than a polecat!* in Sophia's own words; and yet had insisted, against the advice of the few sincere friends he possessed, on entering the church. To secure enjoyment of the comforts and luxuries of a worldly existence, Sophia believed he would willingly pledge his immortal soul, if he had one, to the devil; yet he gave out he should infallibly die a bishop! Less, however,

he declared, in the excess of his ad
through his own deservings than the kind
age of his pupil, the destined Prime M
Meanwhile, as a nearer and more tangil
liminary, he had set his hopes on obtain
benefice young Ap Howel was as equal
not to receive. And it was possible he
manage this through the Suetts. Sir
himself disliked him very much.

"Still I ought not to be so severe on
wretch either—old in wickedness, at all
He has favoured me more than once with s
assurance of regard as an offer of marriag
a person of his character may amount to
Sophia, with a peculiarly despondent sin
her tones and look. "But I don't know
is—it gives me pleasure to tell the hones
of him at times—it is a kind of relief!
yet I cannot say but that Mr. Scarlatt i
in one of his fancies; and that I really
Luxmoor a great deal more than I sha
admit to himself! I have noticed the san
racteristic in you, Miss Pomeroy! I to
always had a great admiration for inte
power! A stupid, blind idolatry, in fact,
ever been in me. And now there can

doubt Mr. Luxmoor's shamefully perverted abilities are of the very highest order; and, do you know, it is my belief, Lucifer himself is only an allegory of INTELLECT devoted to EVIL! What am I saying? Well, of course, those who worship the devil get their due! So I sha'n't venture on making Mr. Luxmoor an object of my particular *culte!*"

She became buried for a moment in a depth of thought that surprised me, and induced me to observe: "Why, what has Mr. Luxmoor done so much to annoy you, Sophia?"

"To annoy me!" she repeated, starting from her revery. "Oh, I don't pretend he has done anything to annoy me! What *could* Mr. Luxmoor do to annoy me? except, certainly, that he gives out that I have jilted him—that I gave him encouragement once—meaning it to be inferred, I suppose, that I afterwards declined the offer he made me, because I had formed more ambitious views on the Hope of Plas Newydd!"

She smiled bitterly.

"And why did you decline him, Sophia, since you seem to admire him so much?" I inquired —with a slight—could it possibly already be?—

a slight tinge of *jealousy* in the curiosity that prompted me to the question!

"Well, for half a score of reasons; but one or two will suffice, darling," Sophia answered, with an unusual depth of sadness in her tones. "He *drinks*, for one thing, when he dares; and a fellow like Luxmoor, drunk, is simply a brute with ten thousand times the skill for mischief and cruelty possessed by the most savage of wild beasts! Then as to his prospects, I don't think he is at all the kind of wood they make bishops of. And, besides being monstrously extravagant, and spending his salary long before he gets it, he is already, I have no doubt, head over ears in debt."

"What makes you think so?"

"I knew him abroad; and he was obliged to live abroad for his debts, people said. He may have paid them off since, to be sure, as he has ventured home again. But he has contracted what your ex-governess might call the *douce habitude* of running into debt—and I don't think he will often be out of it!—However, I interested myself in getting him a situation here, at the time old Dr. Stillcoke and Mr. Scarlatt quarrelled, being then in a good deal of favour

with the whole family. His fellowship, though of two hundred a-year, I knew, hardly kept him from starvation—such an extravagant, reckless creature as he is! So I took compassion on him and this is all the gratitude he has shown me! To accuse me of jilting him! As if a woman could not possibly do one of these encroaching wretches a good turn without intending to make herself his slave for life!"

"His *slave*, Sophia!"

"His *wife*, if you like it better, dear child! It is all the same thing, according to the interpretation of English law! At best, whoever marries Luxmoor, I should say, would have to *keep him*. He is just the kind of man to live upon a woman's earnings; or take them from her by force even, if it were necessary to supply his own heartless luxuriousness!"

"You don't mean to say, Sophia, Mr. Luxmoor would be likely to turn highway robber?"

"Oh, no; husbands, you know, who have industrious or clever wives have no occasion to turn highway robbers, to the peril of their own precious necks, too, Miss Pomeroy, in England! Or, most likely, you do not know. People who have not had bitter experience of the positive

laws on the subject, never could imagine injusti
so monstrous to be legally organized and enforce
as almost essential to the existence of a civiliz
community," replied Sophia, with a laugh b
no means mirthful. "But even yourself, Mis
Pomeroy, if you were to marry without taking
precautions to secure your property to yourself
by a cumbrous piece of humbug machinery, th
sole object of which is to preserve the darling
notion of Englishmen, that Englishwomen (it i
not the case among any other but savage o
Asiatic nations, you know,) are incapable of ac
ing as rational beings on their own account—
tell you—and pray, darling, remember what
say—it would be in the power of any worthl
scamp you might marry to make a beggar ev
of the heiress of Mauleverer, and then to live
your toil and suffering all the rest of your li
if he chose! And that kind of man *alwa*
chooses."

"O, Sophia, you must be jesting now!"

"Not at all. If I have known one case
have known a hundred, and heard of ten th
sand! You seem astonished; but that is beca
you do not know that we women are mer
animals, distinguished from the majority of fo

footed ones by the circumstance that we have rather finer and more powerfully developed instincts! and that in form we bear a nearer resemblance than our compeers in general to the lords of the creation! Why, we even go upright: the female of the ape does not! That is our principal distinction.—Now Luxmoor probably fancies he discerns some talents in me that might constitute me a valuable property; and that I believe to be his main reason for desiring to marry me, and of his disappointment in finding I won't marry him."

"What a wretch!" I could not help exclaiming.

"No," said Sophia, in the peculiar tone of jesting sadness not unusual with her. "What a *man!* that is all one need say. But do you still think now, my dear, that my refusal of Mr. Luxmoor can only be accounted for on the principle that I have a design on somebody else? No! let him find out a person all goodness and devotion, who will thankfully sacrifice existence to his pleasure and service, and not be thanked for it in the end! That is not quite my sort, I own; and I told Mr. Luxmoor so in substance, —more politely, of course, in form! Perhaps

I am a little selfish myself; and cheese to cheese as Mrs. Ruddles would say, is no kitchen! But indeed, I don't want to marry at all, or ever, my dear, sweet pupil! If I could only be sure of an asylum with you for the whole of my life, first as an aid in the development of your fine mind and brilliant talents, and then as a tender and devoted friend and servant for the rest of my days!"

I kissed Sophia, with a full revival of all the warmth and unsuspecting enthusiasm of my early affection for her. This explanation—why was it?—seemed to restore my whole heart and confidence to her. "But at the rate you talk, dear Sophia," I said, "I do not think I shall ever marry either! It would be dreadful to suspect a man of being one of the shabbiest of robbers, so as to see a necessity of binding him over not to deprive one of one's own property—by any shirking means in one's power—and yet go to the altar, and promise a life's love, obedience, and honour to him! Why can't the let women's property be their property until they choose expressly to part with it, like men's, I wonder?"

I spoke in my ignorance. Sophia enlightened me.

"Men make the laws, and, of course, they make them as best suits their own selfishness and arrogance!" was her most true rejoinder. "But you are tired, dear young love; and all this cannot concern you for years to come. Let me see—how old are you?—not sixteen yet, is it?—I thought not. Well, after all, I cannot help pitying most you poor, poor heiresses! You can never know the only true happiness of existence—that of being assured that one is truly and sincerely loved, and for one's self alone!"

CHAPTER IX.

AN INFLUENTIAL INTRODUCTION.

NEVER did I rest more soundly and sweetly than on that night, folded in what I fondly believed were Sophia Sutcliffe's kind and sisterly arms. Splendid dreams haunted my repose, and Scarlatt Suett, in some strange manner, figured through them all, in an infinite variety of heroic and imposing characters, and in robes as gorgeous and changeable as the hues of the autumn woods I had that day traversed, under the crimson and gold of sunset.

When I woke from my long slumber of fatigue, a bright, full sun illuminated the large windows, and filled the apartment with a cheerful splendour to which I was little accustomed

at Mauleverer Castle. Looking through the brilliant transparency, the Plas Newydd landscape glimmered and glowed before me in the morning beams like those the artistic Italian binders amused themselves in painting on the gilded edges of their books.

Sophia had been long risen, but was still busied in writing when I completed my toilette and joined her at her table.

I found she had already prepared a letter to my father, though on the previous night she seemingly decided I should pen my own excuses.

I was now myself in a humor to acknowledge that what I had done required some. Sophia's ridicule, and my own short experience had almost equally convinced me of the folly and impracticability of my pastoral schemes. They could only in reality have entered the fancy of a dreamy and ill-used girl, excited by the peculiar temperament and irritability of my age, to an irrational outbreak.

But Sophia represented to me that signs of panic and too eager submission on my part, would not answer the objects we had in view. We must not preface our conditioning by an abject relinquishment of the advantages of the

position my venture had secured. All its evils were incurred. Doubtless Madame Le Crampon was bellowing for me in every direction. We must try and silence her. But at worst, if I made myself friends at Plas Newydd, my hated governess would not find it easy to retrieve possession of me by force. Meanwhile, it was above all things necessary that Sophia herself should conciliate my father's favour.

Consequently, in the letter she had written to Lord Mauleverer, I found she assumed—and with some reason—the whole credit of making the discovery of my place of refuge known to him. But from the style of the communication, you would have thought she had become possessed of the knowledge, against my will, through her former acquaintance with my person at Mauleverer enabling her to recognise me in the disguise of a country girl, in which I arrived at Plas Newydd! How the truth can be made to lie! After this chance discovery, it appeared I had extorted from her promises of secrecy until certain childish conditions were granted, without which I announced a determination not to return to Mauleverer. But Sophia declared she knew too well the greatness of the interests

l in the fortunes of Lord Mauleverer's
ild and heiress, to lose a moment in
ıg him of my safety; while at the same
are of his deep *and well-founded* aver-
:he family in whose residence I had taken
she had only promised to observe this
she confessed, in a very Jesuitical sense,
m; and yet, if possible, she should per-
n the concealment until his lordship's
was known, and should, for that pur-
ce the liberty of representing me at Plas
as a younger sister of her own.
vindicated herself, and still very truly,
ving any share whatever in my elope-
om my French governess. But she
asion, as I thought, to insinuate the
ny attachment to herself being the pro-
ıotive, by modestly stating that the
h conditions" I stood out for were prin-
ıe dismissal of Madame le Crampon,
own installation in the place of the
instructress.
gave, in my heated opinion, a very un-
recital of my complaints against that
Frenchwoman! But a very strenuous
ıy determination never again to submit

to her rule! She even hinted pretty plainly that an attempt to force me back under it, might be the occasion of some extraordinary and terrible catastrophe! I was silly enough to imagine that Sophia hinted an idea of suicide, and to take an absurd pride in the notion of being thought capable of such an act of resolute desperation!

More was added, which Sophia explained to be necessary to conciliate the pride and despotism of my father's temper, and prevent him from being too much exasperated at my selecting Plas Newydd as a place of refuge. I still considered it was intended to impress upon him that she played an important part in my redemption, and to point out to him better than any formal petition or demand, the advisableness of securing her services in the prevention of any future escapade on my part. To betray me gave her claims on my father's confidence! At worst, these statements were only *extensions of the truth*, Sophia said. She had always excellent phrases for her doings!

In conclusion, she informed Lord Mauleverer, with expressions of what I could not but consider a very slavish and degrading humility; but

she told me, laughingly, that in spite of Mirabeau, words were *but* words, and that to win men, we must be what they would have us to be! that she was prepared to render the most exact obedience to whatever his lordship should command. But a mysterious and emphatic hint—which she explained to allude to her own uncomfortable position in the Plas Newydd family—followed, that the sooner arrangements for my removal thence were made, the better it would be for all parties concerned! And she added, that desirous to be in readiness to execute his lordship's instructions, she had given notice of her intention to leave her present situation. Flattering my father's vindictive feelings at the same time, by declaring that she found little regret in leaving that *underbred* and *parvenu* family, but the considerable pecuniary remuneration they afforded her.

How strange! I remember that although the general tone of the letter, its indirectness, not to say falsification, in points—did not please me much; I chiefly objected to what I considered the needless fling at the Suetts. But Sophia assured me so earnestly it would have the best effect with my father in her favour, that I could

not persist in desiring her to expunge the phrase.

It was determined, finally, that the letter should go as originally written. I had luckily often observed my French governess's style of directing to my father at Nice, though, when I wrote to him myself, my letters were always enclosed, open, in hers. The only difficulty that remained was to find some means of conveying this epistle to the nearest post. It was six miles distant. We decided it would never do to put it in the common letterbag of the house, with which a servant rode over daily, because Mrs. Suett always locked that herself, after examining, with minute curiosity, all the correspondence in it. The direction to Lord Mauleverer would excite her curiosity, and she would form her conclusions at once.

For Sophia herself to go, or to employ a messenger, was equally difficult, without exciting suspicion. And to preserve my incognito had now become an object of greater solicitude than ever with myself. The possibility of a discovery constituting me a subject of interested attentions in the Suett family, was inexpressibly painful to me! There was no resource, it was thought,

finally, except to make application to young Ap Howel, who, Sophia recollected, often rode out alone on his pony. It would be necessary to confide the truth to him, but when trusted, it now appeared, he could be implicitly depended on! And thus this matter was decided.

Our next consideration was what to do with Madame Le Crampon, so as to prevent her clamours from arriving at Plas Newydd. Sophia had a plan to meet this difficulty also matured! She had some difficulty, however, to persuade me into it. Nothing but an extreme dislike of that woman, and desire for a longer stay where I was, at last induced me to yield consent to what my new counsellor advised.

We were to attempt to throw her on a false scent. I was to write a letter, informing my ex-governess that I was under the protection of friends, who had engaged to take me to my mother's care from her cruel misgovernment, and that I was already on the way to London. And this letter was to be posted by a relation of her own, who, Sophia said, bitterly, would not hesitate to do her a *trifling* service, in Bristol. It was true in effect, she argued, though not literally! And though I had a natural and

almost constitutional abhorrence of all the form of falsehood, I was finally persuaded into the course she recommended.

Sophia left me with the letter—that to the Frenchwoman enclosed in one to a Bristol tradesman—to find out suitable messengers. I remained in our apartment, awaiting her return.

As I have said, it commanded a fine view of the Mynydd Howel, and of the extensive range of valleys beyond. I was dressed, and had nothing else to do, so I threw the window open and stood at it for a few moments, listening to the songs of the birds in the shrubberies of the lawn below. On a sudden, however, I became aware of the presence of some human apparition on the scene. I glanced down, and immediately discerned Scarlatt Suett.

He had a nosegay in his hand, of very fine hothouse flowers, apparently just cut. He was tying them together with a piece of sash grass. I thought he would not notice me, and a peculiar kind of fascination kept me observing him. He was certainly very handsome! His step was stately, and yet very elastic. One of the proudest forms of manly beauty and strength it could have been possible for the eye to light on

I involuntarily pronounced him! All, perhaps, but that too-confident and self-satisfied smile! Yet if he was all that was represented, what wonder that a young man of so dominant a genius, looked as if he thought himself the lord of the ascendant wherever he appeared?

I had just formed this conclusion in my girlish mind, when Scarlatt stopped abruptly under the window, looked up, and with a light laugh of joy and triumph, kissed the flowers and threw them dexterously over the sill to my feet.

I retreated from the window, infinitely confused and vexed! But after a few moments' reflection, I grew so provoked at the recollection of the Grand Turk manner this act of homage —which I did not doubt was intended for myself—had been performed in, that I determined to express my sense on the subject, by throwing the flowers back to the donor.

With this purpose I crouched along below the wainscot, and raised the bouquet. But pausing to aim the more effectually, I suddenly perceived that Sophia had joined the object of my retaliation in the walk below. Nay, they had linked arms, and were walking rapidly away towards one of the covered alleys on the terraces below,

as if for the purpose of enjoying a more priv conversation.

A strange pang shot through my heart! A a strangely painful conviction flashed upon 1 that this nosegay was intended not for but for Sophia—that it was a customary mo ing tribute of Scarlatt Suett's admiration, to h All the fine compliments and professions he addressed to me the night before were m persiflage, played off upon a child! Perh they were both, at that very moment, contriv how they might use me as a means to prol Sophia's stay at Plas Newydd!

I watched till they disappeared in the cove walk. Scarlatt never once looked back!

Every moment Sophia delayed in that moved and secret confabulation increased disdainful conviction that she had deceived in pretending there was no foundation but S latt Suett's passing caprice, for his mother's picions.

I confess—mere girl as I still was, and u that hour almost indifferent to any pers advantages I possessed—all the emulation pettishness of a spoiled beauty, rivalled in most desirable sphere of conquest, came u

me! Miss Sutcliffe was indeed very welcome to her plebeian lover! It was plain all she had told me of his haughty character and aspirations, was part of her system of delusion! It was plain she sought only the advantage of remaining in the neighbourhood of Plas Newydd, in all her pretended affection and devotion to me! But was I to allow myself to become the dupe of these artifices? Or should I let her understand that I was not to be so easily fooled? That it was possible for me to inspire interest, deprived of all the advantages she seemed to think were my sole claims on the notice of the opposite sex? That even this Scarlatt Suett of hers—who presumed to treat me as a silly child—should be taught to understand that I was at least too much a woman to be made the plaything of his designs to pique another—to excite the jealousy of Sophia Sutcliffe! Who was this Sophia Sutcliffe? What was she, to presume thus to make me the instrument of her purposes? A poor governess, the orphan of a poverty-stricken curate? With the exception of a few frivolous accomplishments, which my bookish turn taught me to despise, what else was she, to compete with the heiress of Mauleverer, the daughter of

a celebrated beauty, who was said to inherit al her mother's charms!

After so many elaborate contrivances, seemingly to preserve my secret, how could I dream that at this very moment Sophia was confiding to the flushed and gasping aspirant of Plas Newydd my name and rank, and the advantages chance and her artifices confirmed in his favour if he dared venture for the prize? How could I form the mere notion that this beloved and trusted friend was completing as regular a bargain and sale for me as ever grazier and butcher arranged for any unconscious animal of the species I had been so desirous to superintend?

I was in the midst of my irritated cogitation when Sophia re-entered. She did not, however, as I instinctively expected, look flushed and joyous from her stolen love-interview. On the contrary, she was pale, and her eye fell upon me as she arrived with an anxious and probing expression.

"Have you thought me long?" she said. "I have been delayed with young Ap Howel. I am almost sorry now I took him into confidence —he seemed so panic-stricken and amazed when I told him plainly who you are. And yet

the foolish boy said he guessed all from the moment when he knew you had seen the Spirit of the Fall! Trumpery nonsense! He heard me drop your name in my first agitation—that is the truth. However, as soon as he could speak, he declared his willingness to go on the errand. Only he don't know what to do with Gelert. The dog has been howling all night, and will not be pacified!"

"Oh, come now, Sophia," I said, pettishly enough, "you have not been all this time with that boy! I saw you from the window taking your usual morning walk, I suppose, with young Mr. Suett!"

Sophia's complexion flushed up instantly, and she looked veritably guilty—as I thought—of all I imputed to her in my mind at the moment. And guilty, alas! she was, but in guilt of a far other hue and dye than I surmised.

"Yes," she said, rallying after a slight pause, "I was requesting Mr. Scarlatt to intercede with his mother to obtain you the nursery governess's place, the better to throw dust in all their eyes. And I must say I found him wonderfully ready! I would not for the world the people here found out who you are. Should he catch the least

inkling, this ambitious young *parvenu* would turn heaven and earth topsy-turvy to obtain such a prize and starting-point for a still higher elevation as an alliance with the heiress of Mauleverer would present."

"You think, then, it is quite impossible, Sophia, that any one should take notice of me on my own personal account?" I said, excessively piqued.

"Nay, for every one *must*," she replied, readily. "But I would not have you insulted, as I have been, by Mr. Scarlatt's notice, so long as he thinks you are but what I have represented you."

"And yet you seem to like solitary promenades with him! And here is a fine bunch of flowers which, I suppose, you are in the habit of receiving from him every morning!"

"No, indeed!" said Sophia, receiving the bouquet from me, and surveying it with a genuine expression of mortification. "Why, these are of the finest flowers in the conservatory! A camelia japonica in the middle! He must be mad! What will Mrs. Suett say, when she misses them? But she forgives that magnificent son of hers everything!"

At this moment I heard the howl of a dog—of my Gelert.

"Ah, I forgot to mention—Sir Vivian said he should be obliged to fasten Gelert up in the stables. Gelert will not go with him—he will not leave Plas Newydd, where he seems convinced you still remain."

I proposed that we should go immediately, and reassure my faithful companion of my welfare. Sophia complied; and I was in the midst of an ecstasy of reunion with my four-footed friend, when young Ap Howel came into the yard, leading his little shaggy mountain pony by the mane, ready saddled and bridled.

There was something strangely sad and solemn in the boy's manner. He looked very ill, too, and almost tottered in his gait; but he held out his hand to me, and said, with all the earnestness in the world, "But you do not owe me a grudge for our barbarous ancestors' feuds, do you, dear Miss Pomeroy?"

"No, dear Sir Vivian, indeed, if you will promise not to imitate yours when he betrayed mine!" I replied, laughing at the singular notion.

His whole visage lighted up. "My hope, on

the contrary, is to do you all the service in my power," he replied. "But take care that you do not betray yourself, or you will be disgusted with human nature for years to come, when you see what a difference the Suetts would make between Helena Sutcliffe and the Honourable Miss Pomeroy."

We saw him mount and ride off, kissing his hand repeatedly in the distance, Sophia's missive safely ensconced in his breast-pocket. We were then turning to go in the house again, when suddenly we perceived a stranger hurrying out of it, with a bundle of papers in his hand. It was a tall, burly man, with a very carking, eager and yet dissatisfied countenance, bald on the head, but with immense whiskers. He was dressed in a very plain and even slovenly manner, in an old suit of brown cloth, corduroy breeches, and top-boots.

"Robert! where's the carriage?" this personage cried, at the pitch of a morose and imperious voice. "Stand out of my way, women! What are you doing in the stables, Miss Sutcliffe?" he continued, in a peculiarly rude, scornful tone. "Have you seen those cursed fellows with my horses?"

"Here, sir!" returned a voice; and a carriage dashed so tumultuously out of a neighbouring shed into the yard, that Sophia and I had to jump nimbly "out of the way," indeed, to avoid being trampled on. The stranger, however, did not wait until the vehicle steadied. He himself tore a door open, leaped in, and, without waiting any reply to his question from Sophia, yelled, "Leadworks!" took out a pocket-book, and began a reckoning in it in pencil, as the carriage dashed out of the yard at the same headlong speed as it had entered it.

"That is Mr. Suett, senior—worth a quarter of a million of money! but he has no time, you see, to enjoy it," said Sophia. "I wonder," she added, with her sarcastic smile, "whether he would have been so brusque and short with a peer's daughter, as he has been with the two Miss Sutcliffes, dear Helena? Well, now we have only to see Mrs. Suett, and my Bronwen, and the fat little gravestone-cherub twins, and we have seen the whole family."

We returned into the house and breakfasted with little Bronwen, in an apartment which was called a nursery, but ought more properly to have been styled a "forcing-bed." Here the

poor child was kept almost constantly confined, engaged in a routine of studies far beyond her age and capacity.

She was a very pretty child nevertheless. Her face was perfectly round; but her features were small and delicate, and as if modelled in wax, in the transparent fairness of the complexion. Her hair, almost white, shone with a silvery gloss in the curls; and it was curled all over, evidently not naturally. Her eye had the blue, clear shine—of a doll's, it cannot be denied!

She seemed softly pleased to see her governess—smiled affably when I was presented, but received my advances with a degree of dignified reserve. "Who is this young person?" I heard her graciously inquire of Sophia.

After breakfast my interview was to take place with Mrs. Suett. Miss Sutcliffe usually waited on her at that time, to receive her instructions concerning her daughter for the day. And, accordingly, all three of us proceeded to the chamber of audience, which, I was surprised to find, was the principal drawing-room of the house.

We passed through several suites of richly-

furnished apartments. Everything was so modern, so gilt, so splendid, that I confess I was quite dazzled and delighted with the change, from the antique and dusty stateliness of Mauleverer Castle.

Accustomed to a simple toilette in the morning, I was the more impressed to find Mrs. Suett dressed in a superb crimson velvet, with a fine opera toque on her head, sitting in pomp, like some crowned empress, in an apartment that was one blaze of decoration and gorgeous furniture.

Sophia looked at all this splendour with some expression of dissatisfaction, I thought—even of contempt. But we arrived in the presence, and Mrs. Suett arose, as if involuntarily, to receive us, with a degree of fussiness and agitation in her manner—looking back on which explains much!—but at the time I suspected nothing.

Mrs. Suett was very short and stout—not to say corpulent. But her face had considerable pretensions to beauty, in the style of her eldest son's. The features were excellent—more aquiline than his in the cast. The eyes, of a lively hazel brown, full of waggery and keen sense,

gave an active and vivacious expression t whole countenance.

Everything befell in this interview, no d on an arranged plan. Mrs. Suett speedil covered from her first nervous trepidation though her naturally fresh, peachy compl continued as flushed as a peony, she playe part out admirably.

Sophia begged leave, in a very defer manner, to introduce to her her sister He stating, at the same time, with what objec had taken the liberty to bring me to Plas Ne from a school where I had acquired, she hu thought, all that was necessary to fit me fo post of governess to so very young a la Miss Suett undoubtedly was!

We awaited the reply for several mo after Sophia had finished her harangue. I I had some wish to find favour in the sig the mother of Scarlatt Suett.

"Why, my good Miss Sutcliffe," was t sponse at last, in evident embarrassment, are aware I have an objection to very young girls in my establishment; and you me an offer of the most beautiful young cre I have ever set my eyes on in all my days!

"But she is a mere child, Mrs. Suett—only just fifteen!" pleaded my kind sister.

"She looks seventeen—and a fine-grown young woman of the age, too! Scarlatt is too naughty a boy to be trusted near so charming a creature as this: even without beauty, if people give themselves enticing airs enough, the foolish lad loses his head! No; to tell you the truth, Miss Sutcliffe," she continued, with a rudeness a little in excess of her part, "I think I have about had enough of the family! And I must say I take it as rather an extraordinary liberty, after your own tricks upon travellers, you know, for you to bring your sister to Plas Newydd, with any such view, without asking my consent in the first place."

"Why, my dear mamma, what are you talking about?" said a voice at this moment, of one entering the apartment; and Scarlatt appeared, with a countenance all alight with feverish excitement. "Good heavens! can you not believe yet what Miss Sutcliffe and myself have assured you, almost upon oath? Well, I think you may trust in my sincerity now, when I really beg of you to lose no time in allowing Miss Sutcliffe to go, and retain this perfect stranger, if

you please, in her place! Surely you cannot
afraid of one so young—that she may well b
playmate, as well as instructress, for little Br
wen, which is the very thing you want—is it no

What a fool I must have been! This o
preference of myself—this discarding of Sop
on the part of the well-tutored giver of the ap
—sent a thrill of joy and triumph through
whole frame! But perhaps the dark writhi
of scorn and mortified feeling that crimp
Sophia's visage, as the words were uttered,
not altogether feigned! Mrs. Suett's satisfact
in what she heard certainly was not.

"Well, after all, Scarlatt, such a clever fell
as you are, I thought you were not to be coa
into a trap with a smell of toasted cheese ri
But I had my warning from good autho
too!—Well, any way, one nail drives out a
ther! The girl's a million times better-look
than you, Miss Sutcliffe! And one would w
der, so different as you are in complexion
all, how you came to be sisters! So let us
what Miss Helena can do in the governess li
and we'll make up our minds whether she g
or stays. If she suits, I shall be most 'a
(Mrs. Suett had a very cockney pronunciati

to let *you* go at once! Come, Scarlatt, you know more about these *illygisms* and *ollygisms* than I do; so put the young lass through her paces, and let us see if she knows enough, and *not too much*, to be a proper governess for your little sister!"

It may be imagined, if with such an examiner, I was considered competent for the post I offered myself to fill.

CHAPTER X.

GLAMOURIE!

My father arrived, with all possible speed, fi
Nice, to claim me; but too late to prevent
success of the plans organized against me.

He did not hesitate, at a subsequent per
to qualify the circumstances of my residenc
Plas Newydd, as a deliberate and elaborate c
spiracy of all the parties concerned.

Was it so?—I can at least relate the exte
history.

I remained nearly five weeks at Plas Newy
Fifteen years ago, a fortnight only could h
been calculated on between Glamorgan a
Nice, going and coming. But chance was
the league with my ensnarers. My father h

pened to have gone on an excursion, in a friend's yacht, to the coast of Africa, leaving my mother at Nice. And such was the want of confidence between that long-wedded pair—such the awe in which my mother held her husband—that although she perceived our county postmark on the letter, she dared not open it in his absence. It awaited his return; and when my father, almost frantic with rage and apprehension, set off to reclaim his lost child, events of incalculable importance in my fate had occurred.

It was, indeed, a passion of a sudden and rapid growth; verily of the kind unhappy and too well-experienced Byron sang:—

"Alas! our young affections run to waste,
Or water but the desert; whence arise
But weeds of dark luxuriance, tares of haste,
Rank at the core, though tempting to the eyes,
Flowers whose wild odours breathe but agonies,
And trees whose gums are poison: such the plants
Which spring beneath her steps as Passion flies
O'er the world's wilderness, and vainly pants
For some celestial fruit, forbidden to our wants."

But surely there was an evil magic in it too, akin to those spells of the oriental magicians, who were said to cast the seed, and then, with

[illegible] words, the plant shot up into [illegible] and gorgeous flower at once!

[illegible]ieved that the declaration of honourable [illegible]—the impassioned assurances of a lifelong [illegible]—the vehement proffer of marriage I [illegible] from Scarlatt Suett—were, in reality, [illegible] in utter ignorance that I was [illegible] but the fortuneless and lowly-born [illegible] of his little sister.

[illegible] the slightest suspicion but that my [illegible] was perfectly well preserved. I remained at Plas Newydd quite unmolested. I [illegible] little doubt that Madame Le Crampon [illegible] actuated by other motives than the credulity [illegible] to follow in the false scent indicated [illegible]. She went to Bristol, where she [illegible] a great deal of time "invoking the [illegible]," and searching for me under the [illegible] that I remained concealed in that [illegible]. Thence she proceeded to London, apparently in a state little short of distraction, and [illegible] the fact of my evasion to my [illegible]. Old Lady Mauleverer herself [illegible] down at once to Glamorgan to prosecute a [illegible] for me, while Madame Le Crampon prepared to [illegible] the continent to carry the news per-

sonally to Nice. But the idea of my taking refuge among the Suetts never crossed the haughty old baroness's imagination. And the extreme isolation of the mountain districts I had fled to, the ignorance of its inhabitants, the precautions of the Suetts, and the unlikely disguise I had assumed, effectually protected me from so ill-directed a scrutiny.

Meanwhile, all the subtlety of the most artful—all the energy of a most determined will—were at work to bring about the result I have indicated. The object was, of course, to entangle my affections irretrievably before my father's authority could be interposed, by persuading me that Scarlatt Suett entertained for me a sincere, honourable, and, above all, entirely disinterested passion. Sophia had penetrated the inmost secret of my character, and knew that an intense thirst for love and sympathy, mingled with a profound jealousy of all their simulated forms, were the animating principles of my being.

Whether it is to be styled a conspiracy or not, certain it is the whole Suett family joined heart and soul in promoting Scarlatt's objects,

and none more devotedly than the supp ultra-democrat, the father of the race!

How changed was the whole manner of gruff and churlish millionnaire of Plas New when I next saw him! He contemplated with a suddenly awakened intensity of curi and wonder, as if I had actually been s marvellous creature of another species—s fairy princess, strayed out of my encha realm into his!

The elder Suett affected a plain, ru honesty in all his doings. He at once, openly, announced that he had taken a g fancy for his daughter's new young goven and proceeded to load me with marks of fa and attention. Above all, he kept contin reiterating the praises of his wonderful el son in my hearing. He made no secret of large fortune he intended to bestow upon h to enable him to pursue the splendid caree had chalked out for himself. He talked of signing his seat in parliament to Scarlatt the first opportunity; and there is, in fact doubt, that to secure so aristocratic an alli in his family, the elder Suett, almost a republ

to his democratic constituents, would have thought hardly any sacrifice too great!

But, in general—to my charmed eyes—never before had so united and universally amiable a family existed! I knew the secret of this long afterwards!—Accustomed to, at best, the sullen tranquillity of Mauleverer Castle, the life we led at Plas Newydd appeared to me the gayest and cheerfullest imaginable. The associations of vulgarity and plebeian assumption I could not help at first uniting with all the elder Suett said and did, speedily changed in my mind. He became quite a different personage to me when I had once seen him, presiding like some master-Titan over the mighty machinery and numerous workmen that served his behests. He was in his element in the midst of the prodigious industrial development he had himself organized at the foot of the Mynydd Howel. I was taken there by Mrs. Suett, under show of accompanying my little pupil, Bronwen, on a holiday visit to the mines. Scarlatt *happened to be there*, and offered himself as our cicerone. But on this occasion he was abruptly superseded by his father, who, hurried as he perpetually was with business, spared the time necessary to exhibit to

us the principal wonders of the spectacle. A perhaps some portion of my satisfaction was d to the extreme vexation and discomfiture visi on Scarlatt's handsome visage when he fou himself condemned to lug his mother and Bro wen about, while the elder Suett kept fast h of *my* hand! But I listened with unfeign admiration to the great adventurer's account the colossal labours of his undertaking bef success crowned it; and my respect for hi rose with every new sign of his active a nature-vanquishing genius!

I could scarcely imagine how young Ap Hov could hold himself wronged by the appropriati of his ancestral mountains, when I heard t account—almost epic in its alternations of d asters and triumphs—Mr. Suett gave me of t formation and progress of the great compa working the Ap Howel mines, of which he w the acknowledged principal. It was a roman of the earth—of the giants' war with the go in which they used the elements as their arm The story had to me all the attraction of t most marvellous tale of high emprise, and w the more fascinating from its extreme novel The vasty caverns into which the base of t

Howel Mynydd was honeycombed; the immense blazing furnaces; the streams of molten metal; the cindery plains strewed with its prepared masses; the half-naked gnomes, and salamanders in human form, at work in the midst of the flames and smoke; the prodigious machinery, obedient to the touch of a little finger, yet performing the mightiest tasks with ceaseless and unwearying diligence; even, I must confess, the boastful and probably exaggerated account Mr. Suett favoured me with of the golden results of all this ingenuity and perseverance.—Everything I saw and heard amused and enthralled my attention, and finally raised my admiration to a very high degree for the wonderful contriver and master-spirit of the scene.

I began to suspect that I had been reared in a bygone world, and amidst exploded ideas and musty prejudices which it behoved me to rid myself of as speedily as possible.

Mr. Suett, I ought not to have styled the master of Plas Newydd. He delighted in calling himself, with republican simplicity, John Thomas Suett, only! And now the frequent rudeness of John Thomas's assaults and sarcasms on the distinctions of birth and aristocratic position

convinced me that no suspicion was entertain of mine. While it constantly diminished t value of those accidents, in my eyes, to fin them contemned by a person of so much gener sagacity, and intelligence in the true wants mankind! What was my five hundred year genealogy worth in the presence of a man wh protested he would not give a bad sixpence be first cousin to the House of Hapsburg?

John Thomas in reality possessed an infini fund of levelling sneers and arguments, whic he knew well how to season with a good, bitin demagogic wit of his own. I think it must called wit! There was certainly more of t edge of the axe in it than of the razor; perha of the guillotine, only that after all, there was good deal of rusty old English iron in the meta

He could be humorous at seasons. I remem ber, he particularly delighted in railing at t gloom of old residences—of castles in particul —in contrast with his own light-inundate modern abode. I lent ear to this—it agre very well with my experiences. Everything w new, glistening, splendid, at Plas Newyd Everything old, dull, worn out, at Maulevere And John Thomas avouched that all old castl

were haunted by musty and comfortless ghosts, who enjoyed no peace themselves, and would suffer no one else! Every kind of crime had been committed in them: the very shadows of the walls gave people miserable dreams! You lived above vaults filled with skeletons of folks that had been starved to death! He himself, he declared, had not been able to build his place far enough from the influence of the old ruin on the top of the hill! He had gone half-way down it on purpose; but a horrid, screeching ghost followed him on the torrent, and brought bad luck to all who heard her making her Welsh yelp!

But to resume the facts of my enthralment. Mrs. Suett lent a very powerful agency in it; but I do not pretend to blame her greatly for the part she took in the affair. She had at all events kindlier motives than the mere mania for rank and aristocratic connex tion animating the rest of the family. It was intense enough in her, to be sure; but she was besides a doting mother, who imagined that her son's happiness and exaltation were to be secured by the means she took, without dreaming, in her partiality, that mine could be endangered by the success of the

project. On the contrary, no doubt, she thoug she was assisting to make me the enviable w of one of the handsomest and cleverest you men in England!

She was herself a very able woman, thou her education by no means equalled her natu talents. Her aspirations to aristocratic elevati were not unfrequently *h*aspirations, and her p tensions to learning and literary acquirement w ludicrous enough. She had not patience at h command to do more to remedy the defects early training, than what, in fact, rendered the more glaring. Still her extreme kindness a indulgence to me; her genuine admiration; h flow of natural humour and pleasantry, alli though it certainly was to too much freedo and even vulgarity in expression, recommend her to me at a time when all that was origi and diverting had irresistible charms for me. really liked Mrs. Suett very much once. Enou still to forgive her the injustice, I know she p severes to this hour in—imputing to me all t disastrous consequences of my union with h son.

I was installed, as I have stated, in this nov and agreeable household, as nursery governess

the little Bronwen. No time was to be lost. The Suetts were well aware—or, if they were not, Sophia, of course, took care to enlighten them on the subject—that Lord Mauleverer's character rendered the possibility of a willing consent on his part, to the project formed, entirely out of the question. And they were thus farther piqued in their efforts to secure the prize by resentment.

Sophia's crafty genius directed all. Even the hard and opinionative John Thomas allowed himself to be guided by her in this intrigue. I recall, even now, the effect upon him of some peculiar glances she gave him on several occasions, when she probably considered his democratic raillery was going too far. Once, especially, when he began directly jeering at Mauleverer Castle, under the name of Stand-Still Dustbin! But all her skill, and the assistance of those colleagued in the attempt, would doubtless have been in vain, if my own want of judgment, my own sudden and irrational passion for Scarlatt Suett, had not come to the aid of the complot!

I took to my office, as Bronwen Suett's instructress, with delight. I really pitied the

poor child, subjected to so similar a bondag
that from which I had myself escaped. A
my first lesson was a game at romps! Br
wen was of the most simple and implicit d
tility of character, in any direction. I so
learned to like her almost as a little sister—
times, perhaps, too much as an animate do
formed for my diversion. On her part, po
child! she regarded me as altogether out of t
bounds of nature—as some fairy impersonatio
of all that was gay and brilliant in ideas, a
animated in physical existence.

Sophia obtained leave, with some pretend
difficulty, to stay with me for a short tim
until I got accustomed to my new duties. B
she interfered very little in them. And for th
alleged reason, that Scarlatt had taken a par
cular fancy, on the ground that time hu
heavy on his hands, during this long count
vacation, to lend his superintendence in h
sister's studies. She did not wish, she said,
flatter his vanity by seeming to court his socie
or to give renewed umbrage to his mother.

The dilettante professor and governess we
thus thrown at once and constantly togethe
What miracle was it, then, if a totally inex

rienced and susceptible girl, almost exclusively given over to the society of a very engaging and artful young man, was speedily drawn into reciprocating a passion displayed with every possible variety of winning allurement, and apparent sincerity?

Apparent! was it not real? Could so young a man, even under the guidance of the most astute and unprincipled of women, have feigned emotions so fraught with the living fire of passion as Scarlatt's seemed? So instinct with all the manifestations of a powerful and absorbing vitality? Was I incapable of inspiring a real passion, surrounded by that brilliant aurora of youth, when at so much later a period, after so many sorrows—No, it has not been impossible for me to kindle the deepest, the most disinterested attachment! I cannot, I will not deem, but that Scarlatt Suett loved me once—loved me passionately!—with all the strength and sincerity of which his nature was capable! Possibly—very possibly—he owed to Sophia Sutcliffe his first promptings to an enterprise on the heart of the *heiress of Mauleverer*. But I do believe yet in those strong protestations of his, that from the instant he beheld me first, his

sensual caprice for her — why, she has her
assured me of the same a thousand times w
she had no motive to deceive me — entir
vanished! Was not that conviction the a
mating principle of the retaliation she afterwar
declared herself to exercise in accomplishing n
destruction? Ay, and I will believe, that i
dependent of the brilliant hopes he associat
with me, a nobler and purer passion than ev
Sophia's meretricious sorceries evoked, animat
the young man's vehement pursuit of me!
may well be, nevertheless, that it was Sophi
subtlety suggested to him the means to win n
The high-toned romance of tenderness and d
votion my nature craved; the delicate spells
attract all the finest and most generous sensi
lities of my character: in these, perchance, s
instructed him too well! It was not in Sc
latt Suett—I fear I must acknowledge—
prompted, to fall in so exquisitely with all th
was most spiritual, exalted, hallowed, I may s
in my young notions of the passion he stre
to inspire.

No doubt, he succeeded. Not all the cra
spells cast around me can otherwise account
the completeness of my hallucination! I m

have loved Scarlatt Suett once, with all the powers of my being, most fondly, most exclusively—for I love him still! It is a shameful avowal, yet it falls like a natural language from my lips! It was not all an hallucination either! I had some excuse. In his person and attributes he was so well fitted to be the hero of a girl's romance! In character, a young man of so intrepid and mounting an ambition, so resolute, so indefatigable! Young as he was, not unpractised in the most specious wiles and artifices of his sex! And besides Sophia, he had another most crafty counsellor in the devilish Luxmoor! The prize offered was the realization of his own most ardent hopes—a match with an heiress of illustrious descent — an immediate lifting to the highest ranks of that proud aristocracy; to mate with which, on some terms of equality, was the absorbing day-dream of his existence.

I was just at the age when the deepest susceptibilities of the female heart began to develop themselves. And the first spring of the opened fount is ever the most vehement, though it may descend only in showers of drizzle and foam! My soul had been so long and vainly athirst for

the merest human sympathy, that the langu
of youthful love and devotion now incessa
poured into my ears, melted into it as the sv
falling showers of spring into a droughty soi

In himself, a noble and fascinating fig
Scarlatt was presented to me under the most ca
vating lights my chief betrayer's vivid and crea
imagination could array it in. Sophia taught
to behold in this ardent lover the future sta
man and lawgiver of a mighty land: one in wh
person the great principle of modern society,
told me—the supremacy of an enlightened
mocracy—stood practically asserted! No fi
impersonation of the spirit of the age, she ca
convinced me, could be imagined, than t
noble youth, sprung from the people, and d
tined to achieve all but the highest position
the state: a visible refutation of the worn-
theories and prejudices of the past, in whic
had been bred! This woman must certainly h
brought me under mesmeric sway; under
dominion of a charm! When I recall the
cumstances of her influence, I grow a belie
in the magic fascination of the ancients; in t
irresistible animal magnetism of the modern
She was my operator; I was her clairvoyan

I had a supernatural faculty accorded me, only that I might follow out the impulses of her will!

Or was mine, perchance, but the too common and yet beautiful and holy error, of the trustfulness of youth, the radiant delusions of a too warm and enthusiastic imagination? Had I collected the materials for a glorious vision in my mind and heart, and conferred its attributes on a deification of wood and clay? Certainly all that was generous, loving—defying even in my nature—for, though born and reared in the most narrow trammels of opinion, my nature always revolted against whatever was mean, restricted, unjust; took part, finally and irresistibly, with one who soon managed to persuade me he himself purposed the most generous sacrifices on my behalf.

It would avail but little to live over in faint recollection those few enchanting weeks of kindling love and fiery response! To trace the gradual rosying into light of that passion which coloured the universe at last for me! All who have loved have retrieved for awhile the paradise our first ancestors lost! All who have not, what avails it to speak to them of the flowers of Eden?

Yes, I loved Scarlatt Suett with all the tenderness of which the heart of woman is capable with all the implicit devotion and credulity of a girl! I believed in the vehement, almost frantic, signs of passion he exhibited; and, above all, in what I imagined to be a proof of the most generous, disinterested. and honourable attachment he gave me at last—to the apparent sacrifice of all his own ambitious and soaring views—in making me the offer of marriage I have alluded to!

It was thus that Scarlatt seemed practically to refute the notions of his libertine ideas with regard to women, which both Sophia and he plainly discerned me to entertain, in consequence of the revelations hinted to me by young Ap Howel, on my first arrival at Plas Newydd. At the same time the umbrage I might have preserved, at the relations alleged to exist between them, was carefully removed by a series of skilfully graduated obliterations.

In the first place, Sophia made me, as I thought, the unreserved confidante of her position with regard to Scarlatt Suett. She avowed to me that he had for some time professed an attachment towards her, which she had always

discouraged, and was, therefore, the more entitled to feel and express her indignation when his base tutor, Luxmoor, made himself the officious medium of a dishonourable proposal to her! and the insult was rendered the more galling by the fact that this man pretended she had encouraged himself for a long time before rejecting him, as a cover for her designs on his pupil; whom he accused her now of a project of cajoling into a matrimonial engagement certain to be the ruin of all the high expectations formed of him, and with reason, by his family.

Since this event, Sophia declared, a feeling of alienation rather than any other had been manifested towards her by the young man, whose vanity, if no better sentiment, had been used against her by the repulse. I might have observed the tone of pique in their intercourse, she said, on the first night of my arrival; which I certainly had. His malicious tutor continued to foment the feeling in every possible manner, so that at last a residence at Plas Newydd had become thoroughly distasteful to her, and it was herself, Sophia now declared, who had given intimation of her son's demeanour to Mrs. Suett, which secured her dismissal on

the transparent pretext she had mentioned to me. But—and she pretended to own it with a degree of laughing ingenuousness—perhaps she had had some expectation that the prospect of losing her would have brought Scarlatt into other and less discreditable views! She was, however, obliged to confess it produced no alteration in him, and that he seemed already to have made up his mind to desist from his suit altogether when I arrived to complete the overthrow of her slightly-pedestaled ascendancy.

And yet so long as a girlish sentiment of rivalry and emulation were useful to be kept stirred in me, Sophia suffered me to think I discerned in her a secret but profound exasperation at the sudden transfer of Scarlatt's admiration from herself to me. Perhaps, indeed, she really experienced some bitter feeling of the sort! And the pique she seemed unavoidably to divulge on this account, gave her task in persuading me of the merits of my lover a yet more resistless power over my judgment. She contrived for some time to enforce the notion that her praises were extorted—unwillingly accorded to qualities too splendidly obvious to be gainsayed even by the resentment of a slighted partiality. And

thus her exaggerated eulogiums at the same time served to increase my admiration of their subject, and stirred a natural jealousy and spirit of coquetry in me, to maintain the supremacy I had so rapidly acquired.

I do not pretend absolutely to defend this episode in my early relations with Sophia Sutcliffe. But far, very far, was I from any project of supplanting her—which must in reality have been founded in ignorance of their true position—in the commencement of my acquaintance with Scarlatt Suett. She herself constantly assured me she had gained no stable place in his affections, and desired none. And I believe she spoke truly, and as she believed at that period. Utterly unfounded, therefore, are the charges she afterwards brought against me, as a set-off to her own barbarous conduct. It was not in the mere wantonness of the personal and social superiorities she ascribed to me, and some of which I certainly possessed, that I entered into the contest in which I was doomed to be at once victress and victim. But if that infatuated spirit ascribed to me really had entered me, it was Sophia herself who called it into existence, and fed it constantly with subtle stimulants, as the sorceresses

of the middle ages were said to keep in activ
the malignant energies of their favourite imps

And when, in fact, Scarlatt's preference
me became too obvious to admit of doubt, s
was the first to urge it upon me as an irresistil
fait accompli, and to draw consequences from
that reconciled me to a success which at fi
alarmed and infinitely disquieted myself. S
affected to feel great satisfaction in my trium
over the young man's degrading sensual capr
for herself, as a means of visiting upon him a f
condign chastisement for the offence! She h
no doubt that his designs on me were equa
discreditable; that I should be insulted by simi
proffers! And her consolation now was to lo
forward to the shame and confusion that wo
overwhelm him, when he should be made awa
too late, that he had revealed the facts of
variable character, and dissolute views with
gard to our sex, to one whom he might e
have regarded as the most glorious prize of a
bition and love. I was thus at liberty to fa
myself the avenger of my beloved friend, a
even to encourage—so she instilled into me
the full revelation of a depravity which I co
visit with a retribution so signal.

In the midst of all these elaborate artifices and cajoleries, there was but one whose voice was raised to me in warning or dissuasion; and circumstances unhappily gave him rather an influence in precipitating than retarding my fate.

CHAPTER XI.

YOUNG LOVE.

I SPEAK of young Sir Vivian Ap Howel.

After my introduction and installation at Plas Newydd, we became a good deal separated, of course. The boy baronet had not the same pretexts for joining my society as Scarlatt so ingeniously contrived for himself. Yet he made much more resort than ever he had previously done—so I heard—under various excuses, to Bronwen's school-room. Above all, he appeared to take particular interest in a portrait of Scarlatt Suett, which, having some little skill in water colours, I had ambitiously, but at Scarlatt's earnest request, undertaken. He seemed restless, however, and often causelessly dissatis-

fied on these visits, usually left the apartment abruptly, and was in general so peevish and irritable in his manner, answered Scarlatt's gibes with such cutting sarcasms—that I was often in great though silent dread that they would come to some open and violent collision.

Vivian, too, I should imagine, looked on for a considerable time without fathoming the designs in secret activity about me. Grown up as he was in most of his ideas, and keenly observant, he could not bring himself, for a space, to the comprehension of what was happening. He believed that my secret was kept, misconceiving Sophia's true motives, and did not give any of the Suetts credit for a generous appreciation of personal merits in a nursery governess. His suspicions were, however, at last awakened; and he certainly lost little time in communicating them to me.

The romantic delicacy of Vivian's ideas had probably induced him to slacken in his expressions of friendship and interest towards me, after he discovered my real name and rank. But I noticed that he grew at last almost rudely reserved in his demeanour with me. It seemed to me strange, and annoyed me a good deal

until my mind became absorbed in other sub jects, to find that I lost in the favour of my earliest friend and protector, at Plas Newydd almost in proportion as I gained with every one else.

Vivian was not much in the habit of joining in the diversions of in-door life at the mansion His whole attention, Sophia told me, was ab sorbed, with exclusive selfishness, in the restora tion of his own health and strength, by constan exercise in the open air. He avoided study an every species of sedentary occupation or amuse ment. It was no wonder, therefore, that on th occasion of a great dinner-party given at Pla Newydd, about the time I allude to, he decline to make one at it, though earnestly pressed by Mrs. Suett. Indeed, he very rarely could b induced to join in any of the family festivities.

This dinner-party annoyed me. Of course my position in the family did not authorize my presence at it, even had there been no appre hension (there was not much) of my being re cognised by some of the guests. But that wa not the reason of annoyance. Sophia had laughingly informed me that a most formidabl rival "to both of us" was to be present,—

Miss Trevanion. This Miss Trevanion was a very beautiful young lady, of good family and fortune, and Scarlatt Suett was said, in Luxmoor's phrase, to be "very sweet upon her!" and his mother was doing all she possibly could to bring about a match between the young people.

I assured Sophia, rather disdainfully, that it was not of the slightest consequence to me; that neither she nor I, so far as I knew, were pretendants to so prodigious an honor as the hand of Mr. Scarlatt Suett, and could not, consequently, rival the pretensions of any lady whom he might think worthy of it! I left her rather in a huff—took a volume of a poet she had lately introduced me to, and which admitted me into the lurid passion-world of Byron, and strolled to a distance from the house. Consequently, I did not see Miss Trevanion, and was at liberty to form the most extravagant notions of her irresistible beauty and attractions. I had the vanity to feel quite safe on these scores with regard to Sophia—and she knew it! But this unknown enchantress filled me with the most carking dread and jealousy.

I made my way to an arbour at the end of

one of the terrace walks, in a very pettish a discontented humour. And I am afraid my co tenance showed few signs of satisfaction wh glancing from my book, a shadow fell upon and I perceived the lean, dark, sorrowful-looki boy gazing at me with his large, luminous e so earnestly that I was startled.

I thought he came by chance; but he quic undeceived me on the point. "I have been want to speak to you these several days, Miss Po roy; but you seem really haunted by—by the Suetts! There is never the least chanc speaking to you but under their surveillanc he said, after some abrupt words of greeting a vexed and impetuous accent.

"You can speak what you like now, the am sure! They are quite wrapped up, I s pose, in their fine Miss Trevanion!"

"Trevanion! Did you say Trevanion? don't think any Trevanion would visit at Newydd!" Vivian replied.

"Yes; a Miss Trevanion! a beautiful yo heiress, that Mr. Scarlatt Suett is to marr I said; and I felt the blood rush to my ch under the keen, excited glance Vivian cast u me.

"I hope he may—and soon! but I don't think any Trevanion—any rich Trevanion, at all events—would marry a Suett!" he returned, peevishly; and there was a short silence. "Your father must soon be at Plas Newydd," he then continued, with a slight, eager tremble in his voice. "But are you not afraid he may be more angry with you than he might otherwise, for remaining among people he dislikes so? What I wanted to tell you is, that only your grandmother is now at Mauleverer; and if you went back to her protection at once, everything would be made so much easier and pleasanter for adjustment!"

"Why, my grandmother is the worst old woman in the world; annoyed my mother almost constantly ever since I have known anything. I will not go to her! And I don't care if even my father casts me off altogether! He has never cared much for me, I know!"

"You would not be quite abandoned, Hugh-Helena, were it even so!" the poor lad said to me, in accents whose chivalrous fervour yet glows on my recollection.

But I was too much out of humour at the time to admit my consciousness of his true

meaning. "I am sure," I said, "I have no claims on the Suetts; they have been kind to me as a perfect stranger, certainly! but I don't think I should like to stay here always, although they really do seem to make me very welcome at times."

"Ah, Miss Pomeroy," Vivian answered, sadly and thoughtfully, "don't you think the Suetts have in reality found out who you are?"

"I am sure, I am quite sure," I returned, with vehemence, "they have not, one of them, the slightest suspicion of the kind! Do you think they would let me go strolling about the grounds, in this deserted way, if they had?"

And a solitary tear, which I dared not wipe away, started under my eyelid.

"Why, then, that fellow Scarlatt means you no good, you may depend upon it, dearest Miss Pomeroy!" returned the boy, with flashing eyes.

I coloured involuntarily. "What do you mean, Sir Vivian?" I said, angrily. "I think it is you who are of opinion that I am a fit subject for insult, or you would never have dared to make such an observation!"

"Does he not haunt you everywhere?—in

tle Bronwen's room, in your walks, up and wn the house? Wherever you are, there he is! hy did he want you to paint his red whiskers d smiling, lying face, I wonder?—I tell you know Scarlatt Suett very well; and I pledge ou my existence it is impossible for him to nean you anything but wicked insult, unless he is aware of your pretensions to superior rank and wealth."

"You are a scandalous, cruel boy to say so! It is impossible to be more polite, more respectful, more reverential, than young Mr. Suett is to me."

And I spoke the truth. Sophia knew well my ideas on the subject, and she had enforced upon Scarlatt the necessity of observing the most chivalrous delicacy of personal respect towards me.

The expression I had used always offended young Ap Howel. "I am *not* a boy!" he exclaimed, firing up. "I never was a boy! I am as old as you are, Miss Pomeroy! and do you allow them to call you a girl still?"

"I only mean you look so young; besides, girls are always considered older than boys of the same age," I answered, unwilling, on re-

flection, to hurt my young protector's ings.

"Oh, what nonsense!" he exclaimed, i tiently, "I am twice as old as you are, H Helena, in everything that in reality makes Why, I have actually been in love! and I suppose you have ever, have you?"

He put the question with such abruptnes point, that, for a moment, I was too confus answer. When I did make some sort of i it was very little to the point.—"Do you pose that being in love is one of the thin make a person old?"

"Well, if so, I am already a very old fe indeed!" he replied, laughingly. "Yet I i thought I should live to be old! No one has seen the Lady of the Rhaiadr Dhu ever to be old," he continued, looking at me wi singular expression of compassion and ten ness; not for himself at all, as it appeared he added, "But I don't want to live to be o I should like even to die young! I should to be remembered always by you, at least, H Helena (a tear glittered in his dark, deep e as *young* Ap Howel! I never shall—I r *will* be old! But I won't die like a Suet

ome wretched, commonplace disease! I mean o die in battle, like my father!"

"Do you tell me," I replied, with a very unpleasant throb at the heart, "that you have really seen that dreadful banshee of yours?"

"It don't matter! But I know I shall not live to be old in any other way than loving, as if I had been loving for millions of years before I saw the person I was to love at all!" was the poor boy's fervid reply.

My mind was absorbed in another thought: I scarcely noticed him. "What makes you think that Scarlatt Suett—Unless you have yourself betrayed who I am, there is no one else to tell the Suetts."

"Sophia Sutcliffe is just such a woman as Scarlatt Suett is a man—selfish to the backbone! She would sell you for half-a-crown, or smaller change, if she wanted it for any little purpose of her own," he replied.

"*Sell* me!" I exclaimed—"what can you mean? Now come, Sir Vivian! would Sophia be at all likely to reveal anything she thought would turn Scarlatt Suett's attention towards me, when you yourself assured me she was discharged here for setting her own cap at him?—

trying to cajole him into marrying her, know?"

"So I told you—and so it really seen replied Vivian, himself in a puzzled tone. least she played a terribly strong game o quetry with him! No doubt she wanted to Scarlatt into some dangerous trap of her c But I think she must soon have found ou was full match even for herself in egotism craft, and one not at all likely to be led any rash matrimonial speculation. But again, it is my belief she prefers that horrid l moor to Scarlatt, in secret, a thousand times dare stake my word of honour they are perf good friends at heart, though they are al abusing one another before people! I *know* used often to take the same evening walk—c by chance, of course—up to my tower on hill, until I resolved to shame them for t hypocrisy, and played them some hobgo tricks that quite frightened them both, tho they pretend not to believe in ghosts: no anything else spiritual, I daresay, do the reality! After that, there was the row about jilting, when Luxmoor made his offer, and l Suett got to hear about Scarlatt and Miss S

cliffe, and sent her packing! And that is why Sophia hates me so much, and is always speaking against me, I know, behind my back; though I should not care much if she did not do it to you too!"

I was profoundly and very unpleasantly struck by this revelation. Sophia had so often spoken with intense bitterness, and almost every possible term of contempt and dislike of Luxmoor, that this accusation of her secret understanding with him filled me with dread that her pretended indignation against Scarlatt Suett might also only be feigned to enable her to carry on her system of coquetry more effectually under the cover!

"But do you mean to say, then," I inquired, quite panic-stricken, "in spite of all you tell me about Sophia and Mr. Luxmoor—do you mean to say that you suspect her of carrying on a flirtation with Scarlatt still?"

"No—I think not; they have quite left that off at present. And that is what puzzles me, and makes me suspect some worse trick still! Why is she hardly ever with you when you are giving your lessons to Bronwen, and he is always? Perhaps, after all, as I have said just now—you women have such queer fancies some-

times!—she may like that ogling ogre, Lu moor, the better of the two, and be trying make up a match between you and Scarlatt, conditions to his and her advantage, in conju tion."

I was completely horrified at this surmi which had some appearances of probability t struck me instantly with a sickening sense doubt.

"They will find themselves very much m taken then—all of them!" I said, with an in pressible pang at heart. "I even hope n that my father may be too angry with me take me back! I hope he will disinherit r and then no one can imagine these horri greedy things about me!"

"Would to heaven—it is a strange wish fc friend to form!—but would to heaven that y were deserted by all the world, Miss Pomer that I might have an opportunity to show y what disinterested affection really means!" boy returned, with sudden but vehement earn ness.

"No," replied I bitterly; "no one can e care for me, apart from my having a title a fortune to inherit."

"Do not say that, Miss Pomeroy—oh, pray don't say that!" returned Vivian, his whole slender figure quivering with emotion; "I know it is useless for me to say anything to you on the subject—so mere a boy as I am, or rather as I am looked upon by you, I am aware. But poor, feeble in constitution, worthless as I am in all respects compared with you, I feel I could so joyfully devote my whole existence to make yours happy, that I cannot but think I could succeed a thousand, thousand times better than this great fleshy fellow, who, I know, I see, I am sure, has undertaken to secure you as his prey! Oh, were you, indeed, abandoned by your father and all your relatives—penniless, destitute, everything but tarnished in the bright purity of your brave and loving spirit—with what joy, what triumph, what happiness, beyond all utterance, would I not ask you, if I had it in my gift, to share the empire of the world with me!"

I remember I took this strangely passionate speech from a boy, almost precisely my own very juvenile age, quite seriously; but not in the way the poor lad wished me, indeed. "Oh, now I see!" I exclaimed, with a joy I could not dissemble—"I see why you invent such odious

things against poor Scarlatt Suett—you are jealous of him!"

Vivian's sallow complexion flushed brightly up at these words. "Well!" he replied, after a pause, "I cannot deny it—I *am* jealous of him, for I love you—and I see plainly there is a conspiracy on foot to sacrifice you to him! I tell you, you have formed no conception what a cold, selfish, mercilessly egotistical fellow that Scarlatt is! If you could hear the quarrels he has with his father, though all is so smooth and delightful before you! He is terribly extravagant, too there are the most dreadful rows every now an then over his college bills! And he is the pup of that hateful Luxmoor, who is fitter to form devil than a man. Then, again, whatever Sopl may be, what right had he to insult her un his father's roof in the way I have not least doubt he has!"

"I wish my father would come and take home from you all!" I said, half sobbingly, I never heard of such bad people as you ar and all."

"Amen to that prayer! And you may if your father knew what is happening, he annihilate distance to rescue you," said

and he added, falteringly, "no one should know better than I do how much he dislikes the Suetts, since he even prefers a person of my name to them so far as to have made me private offers of any possible assistance I will accept, in money or otherwise, to commence a suit in chancery with the Suetts for the restoration of the property they cajoled my grandfather and uncle out of! Then, if they are besides compelled to disgorge their plunder so far, Scarlatt Suett will no longer have even money to recommend him! And I must make up my mind shortly, too, on the subject, or they will have their one-and-twenty years of possession to bar my rights."

A feeling quite contrary to that he doubtless intended to awaken, stirred in my heart at these words. "And do you think," I said, indignantly, "that if I liked Scarlatt Suett well enough to marry him, I should care whether he was poor or not? And you accuse him, poor fellow! of designs on mere possibilities, which may never be mine, if my father refuses his approbation, while you yourself, already, it seems, in favour with him, and quite well aware who and what I am, have just made me what I

suppose I am to consider a declaration from—from—a school-boy!" and I burst into a rather hysterical laugh; but the words produced a much stronger effect than I had intended. A deadly pallor gave Vivian the look of a marble bust of himself for a moment.

"Just as I thought! I knew she must think so! What a wretched idiot I am to fancy that because I spoke the truth, I should be believed! And a school-boy!—Yes, a mean, shrunken, withered imp of a school-boy!" he muttered to himself, but audibly; then turning to me with a look that remains indelibly impressed on my memory; a look that verily transfigured, glorified, the meagre, sorrowful-looking young face with its burst of light from every portal and exit of expression. "A school-boy! yes!—but one that has the makings in him of A MAN—a *great man*, Hugh-Helena! I do not mean a big one, mind! Only give me time to become a man, and you will see if I have not heart, and soul in me, little as I am, and may remain, to lead an army of giants! I shall be a great general, I know, if I live! I shall conquer, perhaps, a kingdom: there are kingdoms still to conquer, in the east! You are but a mere girl

urself now, Hugh-Helena! Oh, if you would omise me to wait a few years only, I will ake my name—disinherited orphan as I am—ich a one as any woman would be proud to are! As for this Scarlatt Suett, I tell you, e will never be anything! He has no real bilities—no power to sway the minds or hearts of men! No man can be great in anything without *heart!* It is impossible—and this man has *none!*"

The tone of rapt earnestness and belief in which Vivian spoke, exercised a singular influence upon me. I was at once affected with a vehement feeling of indignation against himself—and a vaguely terrible conviction that his revelations were founded in truth! "Leave me," I said, "I hate you—and I hate every one here! But I will not go back to Mauleverer! My father may kill me if he likes, but I will know the truth of all you have said to me before I leave Plas Newydd!"

He was about to reply, when we both heard the warble of a lively little French air, and Sophia Sutcliffe entered the arbour.

Had she been listening to a considerable portion—perhaps to the whole—of our conver-

sation? Was she thus put upon the means counteracting the effects of this warning dis tion of the fine sagacity or instincts of true and fidelity that in those early years glowed with such intensity in the heart of Vivian Ap How I know now she was capable of any means but I did not then in the least suspect her this! But if even the entire programme of performances was to be changed at a mome notice, what did that cost to such a mistres invention and artifice? Reader, if I wrong woman by imputing so much contrivance subtlety to her, she herself is alone to blai she has openly, and with an unblushing fr taken, as it were, credit to herself in it But with what exquisite tact was the *dénouem* brought about!—with such rapidity, and seemingly only by the natural impulse of most powerful and impetuous of the passions

It was easy, at all events, for Sophia to that something had occurred to disturb usually affectionate and confidential relatio I interrupted her when she was about to descr Miss Trevanion's person and attire—whom s said she had accidentally seen—by drily profe ing to take no interest in the subject, and p

posing a walk through the grounds to Sir Vivian, almost in a manner to exclude her from the party. She appeared to be surprised and disconcerted, but she continued in our company, and thus prevented any further private communication between us. The coldness did not change when we were by ourselves in our apartment. In the night, as I lay awake, annoyed with my own reflections, I thought I heard her sob. But I remained obdurate.

The next morning, however, when I attended Mrs. Suett at her breakfast with my little pupil, I was struck with dismay by hearing, as if quite accidentally, the elder Suett reprimand his son for overstaying his long university vacation, and give him orders to make himself ready for a departure the next day with his tutor. He should make a clear house of it, John Thomas said! Miss Sutcliffe might go to her new situation, if she had one; they were quite satisfied with me, and I wanted no farther instruction in my duties. Young Ap Howel also must return to Eton; he seemed quite well enough of his drubbing now!

Among this threatened deportation, I could very well have spared Luxmoor, though his

crafty, glozing tongue, before me, resounded onl
with the praises I best liked to listen to.
remember he often called his pupil his Alcibi
ades, till Vivian one day said to him, in m
presence, " You are Socrates then yourself, M
Luxmoor ! But Socrates was married to h
Xantippe, was he not ? You will not be com
plete till then !"

A singular silence fell on the usually gay ar
rattling tutor for some time after this, ar
Sophia, who was also present, bit her lips t
the blood started.

But the prospect of parting with Scarl
Suett was one of inconceivable affliction to m
I comprehended on a sudden how much I lov
him ! I was too proud to exhibit much sign
weakness, I hope ; yet when he proposed to r
that we should take a stroll together for t
last time through some of his little sister's a
our own favourite haunts on the mountain,
could make no audible reply.

The ostensible purpose, in most of the lo
excursions I was in the habit of taking wi
Bronwen, was to make sketches in water-colou
from nature. I think I have mentioned it h
been discovered I had some talent in this a

Scarlatt accompanied us almost invariably as a guide and protector, in which latter capacity Gelert frequently showed some considerable signs of dissatisfaction at finding himself superseded. I must add, that on several occasions, before my singular explanation with young Ap Howel, I had become uneasily conscious that he seemed to keep us under a general and remote, but careful surveillance. He often appeared at unexpected points in our strolls, though he very rarely joined us. I did not like to mention my observations to Scarlatt, who was already sufficiently irritated against the scornful boy. But I was glad not to discern Ap Howel in any direction when we left Plas Newydd this day. I had a conviction that the suspicions he had announced to me were soon now to be confirmed or dispelled, and I needed no additional circumstance to add to my secret but almost overwhelming agitation.

CHAPTER XII.

THE KERIG Y DRUDION.

EVEN little Bronwen, I imagine, had her instructions. She took a particular fancy to make a sketch of the Druid's Altar, though in general she disliked and shunned scenes of mysterious and solitary grandeur, like that in which those stones of destiny stood ranged in their inexplicable but wonder-fraught group. Thither, accordingly, we proceeded. I set Bronwen properly to work; and very shortly afterwards, Scarlatt, affecting to grow tired with watching her, proposed that we should take a nearer survey of the details of this extraordinary monument. He had seen it often, he said, but had never had his curiosity awakened before. I had

the art to communicate a strange attraction and interest to everything that excited my own!

Vivian was right. I trembled, and ought to have trembled, as I stepped with Scarlatt Suett into the mystic circle. Still more when, under pretext of examining the singular effect of the whale-toothed jagged light through the cleft in the upper rock, he led me under the altar of sacrifice itself.

It would give me too much pain to repeat in detail the circumstances of that eventful interview. Oh, surely, surely, Scarlatt must have loved me once! Deceitful as he might be, and schooled in deceit, ambition and self-interest only could not have given his tongue all that persuasion, that irresistible eloquence of passion! It was not, it could not be, a mere rhetorical effusion, as carefully arranged in its effects as the harangue of a professed orator or pleader! And whatever that darkly subtle woman may have said, with a view to destroy the last lingering verdure of hope in my heart, I will still believe that when Scarlatt Suett told that he loved me—loved me solely, and all-absorbingly—that he spoke what he himself believed at the time, and which really was then the truth.

What else he added may admit of doubt; wh
he told me that his purpose had been to s
farewell for ever, but that he found hims
irresistibly compelled to avow to me that e
istence itself would be insupportable unless
shared it with him—that he was determined
defy every consideration to make me his—th
he was aware that in marrying me—and i
other idea but marriage, he solemnly avouche
had for a moment sullied the purity of h
thoughts towards me—he must forfeit all th
proud and ambitious hopes he had cherishe
from his boyhood to that hour—hopes whic
he believed in his soul he might have lived t
realize—to more than realize! When he d
clared that every other consideration must yield
the one overmastering certainty, that he felt t
happiness of his whole life was involved in t
answer I might give to the offer he was i
resistibly impelled to make me of his hea
and hand! But surely he could not have feign
that pallor, lurid as the dusky light that stream
in upon us from the fissure above, when h
knelt before me, and ardently implored me
pronounce his sentence for life or death!—f
that life or death hung in the scales for him o

words! Surely, surely, all could not have
false, baseless, simulated, in those tones
trembled through my soul like the very
s of a truth delightful as the assurances
nal life and bliss!

e suspicions that had been instilled into
r that I myself entertained, for a moment
ed entirely from my recollection. A
; of gratitude, of responsive tenderness,
d in a full tide in my soul! I answered
might have been expected to answer—
ling, confused, overwhelmed—I know not

I rallied only when I suddenly recalled
's warning! And Sophia herself had
;ly given me notice of the probability of
a scene as this coming to pass. Scarlatt
ound his tutor too unsuccessful a deputy
l his services into requisition again, she
He would make his new attempt personally,
loubtless with the hackneyed preliminary
offer of marriage! With herself he had
hought it necessary or advisable to use so
w a deception; but with a girl of my
e age, nothing was more probable.

withdrew my hands, both of which Scarlatt
seized, and was pressing, in a kind of

delirious ecstacy, to his lips; and I broke forth indignantly, accusing him of his previous disgraceful proffers to my sister; and demanding did he think I was to be deceived by a specious variety in the form of his faithless artifices?

I certify that I do not in the least exaggerate! It is no coinage of revenge! I am not recklessly casting the wildfire back among my enemies! Scarlatt assured me in reply, and with protestations that might have shaken the stones of that antique temple which had withstood the storms of three thousand years—that he had never had any feeling for Sophia Sutcliffe in the least worthy of the beautiful and holy name of love! He knew *that* from the moment he had experienced the noble and elevating passion I had inspired! *Moreover, that all the first overtures and allurement were on Sophia's part!* and that if his senses had yielded for a brief period to the most despicable species of fascination, the first glance he caught of me completed the ruin of all her artifices, and left him no thought, no possible sentiment for any other being of my sex in the world but myself!

I thought then—and I think so still—that this accusing revelation could not possibly have

been concerted between Scarlatt Suett and Sophia. He sacrificed her, as he has always sacrificed whatever stood in the way of his devouring passions and egotism.

I was confused with the variety of contending thoughts that thronged in upon me on this avowal. I could not well make up my mind to believe so discreditable a fact of a person whom I loved so well. Pressed to avow that I believed in Scarlatt's statements—that if I had no other objection I would plight him my troth in return for that which he offered me in all the sincerity of a first and only real passion—I could only falter forth a refusal on the score of my extreme youth, and the certain reluctance of his family to an alliance so much below the expectations they had a right to form for him. This answer rekindled all my suspicions. He told me his father was a man of principles altogether opposed to any species of harsh control and discipline in his family arrangements. That he had always discouraged his own and his mother's ambitious speculations, as no true securities for human happiness, and had urged upon him in preference to accept the solid and assured advantage of a share in his own really useful labours. His

father's regard for me was obvious to every one. He would make the right of pleasing himself in marriage a condition of his yielding to his wishes on this subject. His father was too truly ingroined in his democratic principles—of too liberal a character — too enormously wealthy himself—to make objection on any of the scores I had suggested. Scarlatt had overcome his own life-long impulses: there was only his mother's disappointment to be dreaded; but she loved him too well to desire him to sacrifice the realities of happiness to a glittering illusion, when he should assure her he had placed that of his existence in possessing me as his wife!

I answered with a resumption, no doubt, of what I acknowledge to be the natural pride and hauteur of my character. The vanity of the high-soaring plebeian at my feet probably never pardoned me it. I slighted every restraining motive; and now, with sufficient coldness and stateliness, no doubt, I informed Scarlatt, that if his father was likely to be so obligingly obsequious to his will, I, on the other hand, had one whose consent to a union with him I should be hopeless to attain. That I was not the sister of Sophia Sutcliffe, but the only daughter of Lord

everer; the head of that family which his so unhappily irritated to the last degree.
arlatt played his part of astonishment, inlity, overwhelming belief, despair, all to adion. The exigency had been provided for frank rashness of my temperament calcuon.

it it may be believed, I was not in the least red for the result of all this ecstatic display. nes of the most utter hopelessness and ission, Scarlatt acknowledged now that it impossible for him any longer to entertain shadow of expectation that his passion could be crowned with success; and declared, a humility and earnestness that almost pelled me to belief, that he withdrew the fer he had ventured to make to me, and uld himself for ever from my presence, and at ce.

"I know how it is—I see now too well how is!" he exclaimed, no doubt observing the hange in my looks. "It is that execrable Sophia who has contrived all this, to secure the gony of my whole life, in revenge for what she may consider her own personal slight. You ave been a cruel, a merciless accomplice in the

work, Miss Pomeroy! Henceforth my wh
existence must be lost in a maze of vain rec
lections and useless aspirations. God is not
relentless to the very fiends! He does not sh
them paradise before he hurls them into t
abyss! But at least," he exclaimed, passoinat
seizing my hands and pressing them to his l
in a seeming paroxysm of emotion—but,
doubt, he felt his destinies tremble in the sc
—" at least I will extort from you pardon
the presumptuous wishes and hopes which o
my ignorance of your more exalted pretensio
of your real position, which renders all hope
my part vain, could have prompted. Forgi
me—forgive me, dearest Miss Pomeroy! for t
offer of the only love, whose sincerity you c
ever possibly know when placed on that pedest
before which never could I have knelt with su
implicit devotion, as a few moments ago, at t
feet of her whom I deemed an orphan of a bir
scarcely equal to my own—of fortune infinite
inferior!"

He threw himself again at my feet, in ard
and apparently grief-struck supplication.

I was bewildered—almost overpowered—
various emotions, in the midst of which dou

ess, reigned supreme the passionate tenderness could not but feel, in the depths of my soul, cherished for the pleader at my feet.

Could I refuse him the pardon he demanded, for the offence of loving one whose whole existence had been a long thirst for love? I could not—did not! Some words even trembled to my lips which, incoherent as they were, seemed to inspire him with a sudden wildness of hope. "You pardon, for you share my fault!" he exclaimed. "My God! you do not then dismiss me to a life of despair, after having tasted of the most glorious hope that can be offered to humanity? The nectar of the gods commended to a mortal's lips, and then as suddenly withdrawn, could not have bestowed a more cruel glimpse of a rapturous immortality, if you withdraw that word! Nay, we are all alone, dearest, only heaven has heard, or can hear, what answer you may make me! We are alone, under that Supreme eye, in which all the frenzies of opinion that would separate us are but the filaments of self-tangling insects—when the observance of His simple laws would render us free and happy as the birds that sing around us now. No, no! do not ask it! I will never leave you until you

pronounce the word that gives my whole exist-
ence to misery, or the prospect of a happiness it
dazzles my soul to think may yet, even in the
remotest possibility, be mine! Dearest Miss
Pomeroy! since that is your fatal name—but by
any I feel, I have shown, I must have always
worshipped you!—speak but one word! It is
my life's feat! Do you suffer me yet to hope
or bid me endlessly despair?"

I was deeply moved by this pleading; but
still the shadow of Vivian's surmises brooded
over me. I was by nature frank—perhaps too
abrupt and rash in the expression of my thoughts.
I hesitated for an instant, and then replied, "If
I could indeed trust that you have loved me
only for myself, entirely ignorant that I am the
daughter and heiress of a wealthy peer! But I
have been warned that in reality Sophia prefers
Luxmoor to you, and that she has betrayed what
I am to you, to secure for him a recompense
which she is to share!"

Scarlatt burst into a laugh of mingled rage
and execration at these words. "Prefers Lux-
moor to me! I trust I am not much of a cox-
comb, but pardon me if I say that I do not
think that probable, Miss Pomeroy! But

know how it is! That little imp of an Ap Howel has told you this, to depreciate the slight personal advantages I may possess below the level even of a Luxmoor! I watched him with you in the terrace-arbour for an hour together, when I suppose every one in the drawing-room —I know Miss Trevanion, my mother's favourite, did—thought I was staring like a vacant fool at the landscape! But will it not convince you to the contrary, my dearest Miss Pomeroy, when I tell you that Sophia hates Luxmoor so much, that *although she is his wife!* she has renounced him—fled hither to conceal herself from him—and was engaged in her crafty plans at my entanglement, in the hope of freeing herself, under my protection, for ever from him, when he arrived among us in pursuit of her! He himself confessed it all to me when I had the folly to imagine myself caught in her snares, and to make him the confidant of my senseless possession! She was obliged, it seems, to make terms with him when he came upon her —and she contrived to introduce him into our family as my tutor! But there is nothing she is more desirous of than to escape from him altogether. I am certain of it, and so is he!

But since I have made the discovery, you well imagine I have never looked upon he with contempt and dread."

How amazed was I at this revelation. it inundated my whole heart with the j conviction that I had been misinforme Vivian; that Sophia must in reality have my secret since she had views of her ow opposed to my recognition in my true cha at Plas Newydd. And if so, what gen devotion, what perfect integrity of affection Scarlatt Suett exhibited towards me! I f it, I own, impossible soon to deny that a all men he was the only one that had ever —that ever could be—more than indiffere me! This coy admission was not long b it was compelled to take a warmer and specific hue, until finally—not to dwell on ticulars seldom interesting to any but the p concerned—Scarlatt Suett and I returne Plas Newydd a plighted pair.

We had both entirely forgotten Bronwen she had been at home hours before us.

We returned to Plas Newydd plighte each other by the most solemn assurances ever bound youthful fidelity, and by the

ecstatic embrace of acknowledged mutual and all-confiding love. And more than so: I had been compelled to admit the hopelessness of our ever obtaining my father's consent to our union, unless he should perceive that to refuse it would be in vain, and I had consented to accompany Scarlatt Suett on a flight into Scotland, where only the marriage of a minor, against or without the parental consent, could be legally solemnized. He convinced me that any further delay would be the ruin of our hopes; that I should be taken at once to the continent, and never again be permitted to see him. All that was strange and unaccountable in my wandering from Mauleverer, he tenderly told me — which he now believed to be the impulse of his happy destiny—would thus be explained, and no precipitation appear on the face of things to the eye of the world.

I have no excuse to offer for this blindly hasty credulity and yielding, saving that I was not yet sixteen years of age, and perfectly besotted with the excess of my love and admiration for the man whom I had chosen as my husband, I fondly deemed, yet more, in the face of heaven, because

it was in defiance of the unnatural prejudices of man!

I have disburdened my heart so far, as I understand it myself, of the whole truth of this affair, which at the time occasioned so much speculation and wonder. It would have been easy for me to conceal the real facts, and not to give to chance that undignified share which it doubtless will appear to have had in the disposal of my fate. I might have given all the air of a Romeo and Juliet attachment to the circumstances of my union with Scarlatt Suett, agreeably to the popular notions on the subject, instead of representing it as it was—the result of a schoolgirl's rash adventure, and of a crafty elaboration of apparent accidents. Here is the plain truth; stranger than fiction, certainly, but by no means so probable.

It is singular how vividly impressed upon my memory are the most minute circumstances connected with that great event of my young existence!

In particular when we returned to Plas Newydd! It was the most glorious autumn evening I thought, that had ever wandered out of heaven, with its shining robes still scented with

the odours of Paradise. There was indeed something of a visible and incarnate presence in the glowing splendours of that memorable evening! I saw it ascend the skies in its crimson and dark-green and golden-tissued garments, a single star burning on its august Titanic brow! And I dreamed in my folly that Nature herself, like some tender and sympathetic mother, bent from the radiant skies to cast a blessing on this unauthorized betrothal!

But how can the rich, the glorious emotions that pervaded my whole being, be described?

A new existence had burst upon me! or rather from that hour it seemed to me that I began to live! My whole frame thrilled in every fibre with some unknown vitality! My whole soul quivered with an infinite, vague, wandering, ecstatic music — like that harp of the winds that seems to echo some impassioned delirium of harmony under the touch of their supernatural fingers!

I remember even that I beheld a sight that ought to have affected me with a strange implacable hardness. One part of our road commanded a view of the ruins of Ap Howel Castle, on the summit of the hill. Amidst the sunset-

crimsoned towers of this decayed fortalice, hanging over the torrent in the eagerness of his observation of our distant forms, I plainly discerned the outlines of young Vivian's slender figure. But I felt so happy in my own deep love and thankfulness, that I scarcely thought of what might be the effects of what had happened, or was to happen, upon him. I had grown so much a woman in a few short hours, as to look upon the ardent boy's avowal of attachment, as a mere child's caprice, proper only to excite a smile.

I had stipulated with Scarlatt that he should not yet avow to the elder Suetts who or what I was. I was anxious that my father should perceive, in their astonishment at the disclosure, an assurance that they had taken no unworthy part in the affair.

But, strange as it may appear, it was my intention to communicate all that had happened to Sophia. Scarlatt, indeed, hinted it would be much more advisable we should conceal our purposes—which she might, he insinuated, betray—from her! But he saw how readily my suspicions revived, and how determined I was to ascertain the reality of the statements on which

I based my confidence in himself. Accordingly as soon as I re-entered the house, I inquired for her; and ascertaining that she was in her own apartment, thither I hastened at once to her.

I am afraid I cannot doubt that the exultation with which I told my story of the legitimate proposals made to me by Scarlatt Suett, dwelt long and poignantly in the memory of Sophia, and was no light stimulant, subsequently, to her vindictive feelings. She affected, however, to listen to the account with an air of smiling incredulity, as who should say, "A trick, no doubt!" which I have since concluded to have been assumed for the purpose of urging me on some decisive proof of the sincerity of Scarlatt's offers. I grew irritated at this, in conjunction with the suspicions working in my mind, and told her, too plainly and abruptly, certainly, that I was glad it was not at least a trick of the kind her young enemy, Sir Vivian Ap Howel, had suggested to me as possible for her to play me! And she could easily infer the information I must have received in addition, in the avowal I made of the means by which the suspicions infused in my mind by young Ap Howel had been removed, namely,—Scarlatt's revelation of the

fact of her secret marriage with the Reverend Carolus Luxmoor, and her extreme dislike of him that had induced her to grasp at any means of escape from his control.

Never, at any period of my existence, have I witnessed—it is, indeed, impossible to imagine—any more complete and painful picture of humiliation, shame, and consternation, than Sophia Sutcliffe presented on this disclosure. She crimsoned—she turned of the most deadly pale! she gazed at me fixedly and glaringly, as if she scarcely comprehended what I said. I saw her hands clinch, and raising her eyes upwards, all but the white disappeared in a species of convulsive appeal, the agony of which I could then but half comprehend. Nevertheless, I was overcome instantly. I threw my arms round her neck, and bursting into an effusion of sobs and tears, I called her my sister—my dearest sister; and declared I was convinced only the most barbarous and wicked conduct on the part of the bad man I was sure Luxmoor was, could have driven her to act as she had acted!

She did not speak for some minutes; then, with a strong shudder, she seemed to return

to her habitually powerful control over herself.

"You are right, Miss Pomeroy!" she then said, a little gaspingly; "but, bad as he is, this betrayal of the poor wretch whom he has driven to such extremities, is the one of his misdeeds I should find it the most difficult to pardon. Good heavens! after he had himself, in a manner, forced—compelled me—by the dread of the tyrannous control the law has given him over my person—to affect an interest in Scarlatt Suett which I never felt!—to play off really disgraceful cajoleries upon him, as he, too, must, doubtless, now believe—in order to obtain an influence over him, and secure for the wretch a chance of the excellent living which it is probable will soon be in the gift of young Ap Howel's guardian! On these terms only would he consent to suffer me to exist at a distance from his polluting possession, with the unmolested power of earning my own existence, which I had hoped to effect in your service, dearest Miss Pomeroy! And now he has broken the secresy I purchased from him, at the price of nearly all I could acquire by the joyless labours of my position—possibly in mere tipsy wantonness! or, still more

probably, with a view to provide himself a means of extortion from the Suetts,—not taking into calculation Mr. Scarlatt's exceeding sense of what is due to his own prospects and advancement in the world, on your arrival; but knowing that to constitute the crime he would have made the machinery of his rapine, it was necessary his pupil should know I was a *wife!*"

She removed me very gently from her bosom, but with a sense of repulse that to this hour I retain, and covering her face with her hands, concealed from me the wrench of that anguish in her heart which doubtless assailed it at that moment. Still it now appeared to me so plainly proved, that there could be no possible concert between my lover's statements and hers; that I yielded myself unreservedly to a painful and yet happy conviction, that I could rely absolutely on Scarlatt's generous truth.

Thenceforth I felt only compassion, and an anxious desire to alleviate the sufferings of my friend.

"You are right in detesting this wicked man, Sophia," I said; "but do not give way to grief. We will find a means of freeing you from his

cruel dominion much more certain and satisfactory than that you had adopted."

"There is none!" she replied, mournfully, but without raising her head from the attitude of powerless dejection into which it had sunk. "The law of England gives the woman to the man as a fond slave! I am Luxmoor's. I cannot extricate myself from his inexorable coil but by rushing into the arms of death! I had obtained myself the promise of a short interregnum, under condition of supplying him with all the proceeds of the office I had imagined I had secured for myself at Mauleverer Castle. Before you came, I could only resolve upon a desperate flight from the designs I saw thickening around me, and the discomfort I experienced from the consequences of the villain's own suggestions! And now I am all hopeless again; and, in addition, branded with the disgrace of a detected hypocrisy, organized apparently with a view to deceive the only true and trusting friend I have in the world!"

"But I am entirely satisfied now that you could not help yourself in this, Sophia!" I said, in all my old tones of affection. "Only tell me, how could you bear to do the behests of a man

like Luxmoor? Why did you not rather expose him to the world as the cruel, unconscionable wretch he must be: surely some protection from law or right must be found in it for you!"

"None whatever!" she replied, with a singular calmness of desperation. "None whatever! If I had even the money to purchase it, the law gives no divorce to women who cannot prove crimes more horrible than ever Luxmoor has committed against me, to justify the demand for a release from a bad husband's thraldom! But worse than this legal impossibility," she added, with a lurid smile, "another exists in my own heart. Far from hating Luxmoor—as your happy lover seems to believe—I *love him!* The curse pronounced on man was only labour; on woman, it was to love the tyrant lords appointed over us! I love this wretch, my husband, Miss Pomeroy; and the love I have entertained for him, and must still entertain to the last hour of my existence, is the destined curse and miserable torment of my life; for there is nothing in him worthy of love, and I know it, and I love him still!"

CHAPTER XIII.

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

SOPHIA felt the necessity of entering on some explanation of the strange anomalies her conduct so visibly presented. In the hackneyed phrase, she told me her story. And I do not deny there was much in it worthy of much pity and commiseration. Mine it had, and from my inmost heart; for every lingering sentiment of suspicion and rivalry vanished from it as I listened to the tale.

I have no reason to think that Sophia exaggerated, or otherwise, on this occasion, attempted to give me false impressions. But I will relate what she told me, as nearly as I can recall the particulars in her own words, though it is but

too certain they did not often afford reliable gleams of torchlight into the her mysterious and complicated charact

"I told your mother the truth, but n truth, when I first presented myself be Sophia thus commenced the story of l tressful chances." "How could I, wl just left the man who was undoubtedly band, and armed with all the merciles English law confers on the worst wre have a claim to the title, but who had so villanously to me that I had resolve with him for ever, had made up my endeavour to live away from him, con my own exertions, and never to as name in a country where as yet I was r by it.

"A strange thing, was it not? Bu not think it so strange, when you he all came to pass.

"In the first place, do you know mother was so kind to me, when I ap fore her in my deserted plight at M and why your proud father would not to find refuge under her benignant p Ah, Miss Pomeroy! your mother n

well have been mine instead of yours! My father was at one time engaged to be married to her—when he was an interesting young curate, and she was only the fourth portionless daughter of a country squire. But *your* father came in the way, and carried off a prize for which mine lacked the energy—the selfishness and egotism he considered it, poor man!—but half the people's goodness and conscience are only fine names for want of courage and activity of spirit to effect what they desire!—to contend. But still, had your mother been mine, it would only have been of advantage to me, probably, in personal respects! I might possibly have been another Helena—and worthy of the name—who has only to appear 'to subdue every heart to her sway!' But I should not have been the elder Honourable Miss of your name—and to be Miss Sutcliffe still more emphatically were of very slight advantage indeed! It was bad enough to be so as it was! I reiterate, my poor father was *starved to death!* I don't mean to say in three or four days, so as to make a newspaper catastrophe of it. On the contrary, it took him ten years' steady work at it before his originally excellent constitution was completely undermined

by privations and troubles, and he sunk into a formal consumption. Ah! I have known the time when I was, sorry he was not a dancing-master or a singing creature, when I used to see the things alighting from their broughams to give lessons, at a guinea an-hour, while my father toiled afoot anywhere with his Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew at half-a-crown!

"It was his own fault, however, I must admit—he ought not to have had a conscience. Think of a curate with a hundred a-year—half deducted, too, by one trick or other—setting up for a conscience! And after committing matrimony, to crown the absurdity! Chiefly, I verily believe, that your mother's lingering hesitation on his account might no longer stand in her way to what she herself—a *little* unkindly—had openly avowed would otherwise be her choice.

"Think, too, of his marrying a still poorer young creature than himself—purely because she had taken it into her head to fall in love with him in the pulpit, seeing him look so pale and interesting, in his Sunday lawn, after he found himself slighted for the sake of the great Welsh baron! The mother—poor, artless creature—my grandmother, whom, perhaps, I take more

after than either of my immediate progenitors—could not keep the truth concealed from the gentle, forlorn young parson, for the sake of her poor dying child; and he took compassion upon the loving thing, you know—and here I am!

"My mother died when I was very young; and my childhood, Miss Pomeroy, was spent a good deal under the care of my grandmother. She was in most respects, however, the reverse of yours. Did you not tell me yours was a tyrannical, exacting old hag? I beg your pardon, dear! That is not a proper, roundabout, mellifluous phrase of society; but it is, perhaps, nigher the mark than most of its coinage! My grandmother, then, was the most indulgent, careless old woman in the world, thoroughly well skilled in it too; and—I don't mind confessing it to the heiress of a peer of the realm who, in her sixteenth year, does not think herself too good for a commoner!—she was neither more nor less than a fancy haberdasher in the little town of S——. Not very rich, you may conclude. I have even served behind her counter, when I was a child—more for amusement certainly than aught else. Allow me to assure you, I am not such an insensible wretch as to be quite

indifferent to the disgrace! What would they think of me at Plas Newydd—and even at Maulleverer Castle, where they have not quite such a horror, I believe, of everything *low*—if such a rumour had by any chance reached people's ears?

"My season of trial came early. My grandmother died—and my father took his religious crotchets into his head! I have told you that he was fitted to be an ornament to the highest station in the church; had abilities, learning, and virtue, that would have admirably become a bishopric or a deanery, if bishoprics and deaneries were usually bestowed on abilities, learning, and virtue! Perhaps they are: I don't say they are *not*; but then it is necessary to have good patronage also! Some people indeed think *that* the one real requisite; and this also my father, at one time, possessed. But he had undertaken to follow these strange, visionary, will-o'the-wisps of his that he called *convictions*—and they led him into a wonderful mire! After all, what is Puseyism? I can see no great harm in it! Really, for the most part, their innovations, or restorations, appear to me chiefly of an ornamental or decorative character that no person

of taste needs object to! Do they expect the devil to come dancing in, in a jack-in-the-green, that they make such a noise about a few flowers? —But my father chose to have a conscience in the matter—to stand obstinately on what I think he styled the evangelical principles of the reformed churches! even so far as to enter into direct collision, not only with his rector, but with his patron. His lordship—our patron was a lord—and we have not been lucky in lords, neither my father nor myself!—wished to introduce some pretty objects enough, I am sure, into our little old parish church, which was already Gothic, and much as it had been left when they carried out the whole thing in proper style. An embroidered velvet altar-cloth, some handsome gilded candlesticks, perhaps a crucifix, or something of that sort, beautifully carved, from Italy: and my father was so enamoured of bare, shabby, whitewashed walls, and an old wormeaten oak table, as to object! Of course we lost our patron, and turned out of our curacy, as soon as convenient. My father's learning, goodness, diligence, the universal love of his parishioners, availed nothing. Out of our curacy we went, set adrift on the world like tame

birds from the cage, to pick up worms and mag gots with the active, unprincipled sparrows, an with hawks sailing overhead, in every direction for a pounce!

"To complete our misfortunes, we got int the ecclesiastical courts on the questions in dis pute, my father being pushed on by a numbe of persons who constituted themselves defender of the true faith protestant. We had three de cisions: one against and two for us, and on final appeal to the Privy Council, I think the judgment was pretty exactly divided into fo and against. Each party was in consequence very properly, mulcted in his own costs. The zeal of my father's backers fell off when they found they had only a partial success for their money. The little private fortune he possessed vanished in the shape of costs; and he had ac quired a reputation for zeal and learning that completely finished us up for any more curacies.

"Some kind friends, however, did not desert us. There are good people in the world, cer tainly! They got me into a charitable educa tional institution, founded and maintained by people on our side of the question, of course But not until I had had a bitter seasoning of poverty with my poor father! I have ever

what wanting bread means—literally! r wretchedly my father and I were off y a day, Miss Pomeroy! I am quite · hungry people still, sometimes—for children especially! But it was not brought it on us: you can't tell what rious man my father was! I am per- e was one of the finest scholars, as well ien, that was ever allowed to want for mon necessaries of life in England! that! He could translate from Greek rew—and Sanskrit even, I believe,—as s I can from French and Italian!— er of unintelligible stuff he understood. it in schools; he taught privately. He ers—and did curate's duty, without the ne name of it, to keep him under the a-year act, you know. He wrote ser- e christened, he buried, he married, he the sick—did everything but give tithe —It struck me as so odd!—my father to put any one through the Mécanique hat liked to ascend to the empyrean of tics—and had hardly ever enough to baker's bill on earth! I declare that rs ever dressed so badly, fed so badly,

were shod so badly, as we—the Reverend Edmund Sutcliffe and his only daughter. We had often nothing in the house but the thanks of some learned foreign body, for some profound communication or other!

"After I had been a few years in the institution I have mentioned, my father made a truly christian end of it. But it gives me no great consolation to remember it. Ah, how white, how thin, how worn, he lay dying on his poor bed, and in arrears of rent for that too! I don't forget his last words either, when he saw me crying my eyes out for what, I am sure, if I had had any sense of pity for his dear, broken, crushed heart, ought to have made me very glad! He spoke in a voice so weak and low you would have thought it came from miles away! And I will tell you what his last words—almost—were. 'My child,' he said, in that ghostly voice of his, 'you see in what affliction and poverty I am lying here, on my bed of death! Had I preferred the world's goods to the integrity of my own conscience, before God; I might have been as rich in them—in all the pomp and pride and vanities of the world—ay, and with much outward approbation and applause of men—as I

am now poor! Yet remember, my child!—(he was always preaching humility and patience to me—and I have profited in some measure, I hope, by his lessons!)—I would not exchange this bed of poverty and death, now when I know all but the full meaning of both dread words, for all the world could once have offered me, at the price!'

"Don't you think he must have been delirious, Miss Pomeroy, to say so?

"I went back to school without a relation or friend left that cared enough for me to inquire what became of me. It was a religious school, you know—a *very* religious school! So that I admit I have had every advantage to be a good, moral creature. I take no credit to myself on that score! How many poor wretches, who have not such opportunities, are brought up quite to shock people by their wrong ways of going on? But this institution only allowed girls to stay in it till they were eighteen. Until then, I remained there all safe and comfortable. Then I was obliged to turn out. I had worked terribly hard for the purpose, and so I was fit for a good situation at once. And at my own earnest desire, the society

procured me one as under-governess in a family travelling abroad.

"Mr. Luxmoor was tutor to the elder sons of this family, young collegians, whom, at the request of the Marquis of Glumstarch, the great personage we all belonged to, he had accompanied on a continental excursion.

"You have seen him. I can't pretend he is a beauty. Some people, perhaps, think him ugly. But I never placed much stress on mere personal attributes. I had none to boast of very particularly myself. Intellect I had always made the god of my idolatry; and Luxmoor possessed it in a degree that excited the admiration of men,—a sure passport to women's! I had seen how goodness fared in this world. Besides, I did not know that Luxmoor was a bad man. He filled a highly responsible position in a great family, the mistress of which, at all events, was an exceedingly religious and straight-laced woman; and when he chose, he could put a restraint on his passions and appetites, and present himself to all inquiring eyes not only as a decent, but as a highly creditable and honourable member of society.

"His abilities, as I have said, were undeniable—

He had taken the highest honours in his University, and was one of the most popular tutors in it—was fellow of a rich college, and one understood to be marked out for high preferment. He was of a most respectable family, son of an eminent church dignitary—Dean Luxmoor. He was something of my own early turn of mind—free, bold, inquiring in his opinions; so witty that he seemed wise; as eager as I was, at that time, to enjoy the pleasures of existence, which I had not tasted, and with which he had glutted himself without being satiate. He had the terrible advantage of being a great deal older than I was, without looking so! Ugly people, if he is ugly, don't look old in a hurry! Neither is he old. He wears his green spectacles as a disguise against his creditors; and his baldness is the result of a fever brought on by excess of dissipation.

"Luxmoor seemed to take a fancy to me from my first appearance on his horizon. He had previously been carrying on a flirtation with the head governess; and, strangely enough, do you know, she was your staid essence of propriety, Madame Le Crampon! And the old fool was actually going on the high sentimental tack

with him—a wooden woman like that, to whom nature has scarcely granted the merest animal sensibilities—and with him who is as obtuse as a rhinoceros to all the refinements and delicacies of moral feeling! The contrast between the realities of these people and their pretences struck me at once; and I believe I first attracted Luxmoor's particular attention by the unsparing fun I made (in English) of him and his whalebone *amoureuse!*

"Madame Le Crampon was, as you know, a widow, and flattered herself that she had made a conquest, *jusqu'au mariage*, of the laughing but crafty tutor. He never had a thought of the kind; and, I believe, when he turned his affable regards first on me, he thought he should have made a still easier prey. But while he imagined he was simply entangling me, he was getting himself into a mesh from which, burly as he is, he was not strong enough to break when he came to perceive his danger. In brief Luxmoor fell desperately in love with me—and finding there was no other way for it, was obliged at last to offer me marriage. Only this worthy clergyman declared that, as he derived the greater portion of his income from his fellow-

ship, we should be obliged to conceal our union until some one of his numerous patrons kept their words, and conferred on him a benefice, sufficient to enable him to live openly, in a style worthy of the condition in which he should like to present his wife to the world! The good old monkish customs, it seemed, are still kept up at our universities—and produce, of course, some of the good old monkish results!

"However, as I have told you, I loved Luxmoor—and I am very capable of loving with a self-sacrifice and devotion that might, perhaps, even vie with the generous enthusiasm of your tenderness for Scarlatt. He had acquired with me the greatest of all influences over a woman —he was the first that had ever stirred the warmer passions of one in my breast. I consented to all he advised—accepted his offer—and we were privately married. Madame Le Crampon's jealousy was not long in enabling her to observe a degree of familiarity between us which, perhaps, justified the very unfavourable report she made of mine and the tutor's conduct to the Marquis and Marchioness of Glumstarch. The Marquis was indifferent to it—a jolly man of the world. But not so the Marchioness!

dismissal rather than divulge my secr
moor immediately declared himself in
the injustice of my treatment on his
and dismissed himself.

"We returned to England; and
understanding that it was necessary sti
our marriage a secret, he went back t
lege in Cambridge, and I followed him
days to lodgings, which he had taken
a quarter of the town where I soon fo
was a good number of other perso
supposed, not real, condition located
lived happily enough there for awhil
constantly for better days, and fed by a
from Luxmoor that he should infall
reach the object of his expectation, a
then be enabled to introduce me to the

ively, jeering conversation and books. And—though I am not naturally fond of study—to please him, I applied myself to acquire all that I thought would place me more on a level with his comprehensive and audacious intellect. What I learned now, I fear, pretty well reversed most of the information instilled in me at my religious school; but you can't tell how it diverted the wretch to hear me come out in his own style, even on subjects that ought to have been doubly sacred to him in his sacerdotal capacity! But he had not the slightest respect for that, and, of course, I soon lost it too.

"But when I ceased to be a new toy, I soon found that a change came over, not only the spirit, but the body, of my dream. Luxmoor began to neglect me, and to throw off the mask in other very important respects. I found that he was addicted to habits of the most disgusting intemperance. He speedily destroyed even the slight degree of respectability my anomalous position at Cambridge enabled me to preserve, by coming repeatedly, in a state of the most dreadful intoxication, to visit me. You never saw a drunken man, did you, Miss Pomeroy? It is a fine sight at best, I can assure you; but

Luxmoor becomes the most gross, sensual, disgusting of madmen under the influenc drink! When I remember what I have fered from his brutality on those occasions, I disposed to consider myself almost as vil himself to have endured so much so long! (those abominable wine-parties!—those ch pagne breakfasts!—At last, while under spell of his detestable vice, he took to brin all kinds of riotous young fellows in his c pany to finish the day in mine! They v ignorant of my true position, and could not expected to entertain much respect for my a rent one. The explosions of my irrita seemed to amuse them. I was exposed to sults which a husband, with the proper feeli of one, would never have allowed his wife to the danger of encountering. Of course temper was roused, and altercations, of a vio character, became frequent between us. I moor is a perfect brute when he is enraged— will even strike a woman! I bear the mark one of his cruel blows on my left breast sti but much deeper in the heart below it! I h been told it may, perhaps, produce a cancer s day—so let it!

"Add to all this, that at last I became reduced to want almost for the necessaries of life! Luxmoor was already deeply in debt. He had gone through all the very considerable fortune left him by his father. But there was no extravagance of luxury, or sensual gratification, that he considered it proper to deny himself. His talents had hitherto in some measure enabled him to supply this demand on his resources, and stave off the evil day of reckoning with his innumerable creditors. But with his increased obligations there seemed to have grown upon him a greater recklessness in their discharge. He drank more and more. Instead of teaching, he gambled. He is by nature the most indolent of creatures, and will only work when necessity drives him. I was soon so miserably off that I have actually been days without a substantial meal. Meanwhile he was revelling at his chambers in every kind of luxurious abundance! At last I grew tired of it, and broke his solemn injunction that I was never to visit him in the college; and then I found out what completed the measure of my disgust and indignation against him.

"I met his laundry-woman on the stairs—a

great, fat, oily-looking woman, with goggle eye
and a shape like a feather-bed with a rope tigh
ened in the middle. I thought this lady ask
my business with Mr. Luxmoor, in a very sauc
peremptory, unaccountably assuming manner!—
and I daresay I did not answer her so obliging
as I generally endeavour, even when I consid
the questions people put me rather impertine
But my new acquaintance was a fiery one, to
in fact, she was a professional cook as well
laundry-woman, and enjoyed a fine reputati
among the learned guzzlers of Cambridge f
her skill in the preparation of certain of th
most esteemed dishes, which had early reco
mended her to Mr. Luxmoor's attention. W
not to make my story too long, we came to
rather riotous explanation on the stairs, and
had the gratification of learning almost in t
same breath, that I was 'a *h*artful young hus
that ought to be reported to the proctors for b
behaviour, a-coming after gentlemen in th
own private chambers, where such creatures
me didn't ought to come ever!—And that
denouncer knowed Mr. Luxmoor didn't want
such trumpery after him, for he had promis
and sworn, by all that was good, that althou

he couldn't, as a gentleman, marry *her* (the lady addressing me), he would always be true and faithful to her as a husband should, and be a father to her six small children, which was all his!—as he knew very well hisself, and had always *acknowcolleged*, though he couldn't openly, for fear of an exposure!'

"I was hungry when I put my foot on Mr. Luxmoor's landing, but this information took away my appetite. I gave in a little tamely, perhaps, and went my way, in a very pleasant state of mind, you may imagine, home to my lodgings. When Luxmoor and I next met, we had an explanation, you may believe! He came prepared to make a jest of the whole transaction —to confess somewhat of what had been imputed to him by his intelligent paramour—but to pass it all off as a circumstance of his bachelor days, with which I had no concern, except to join with him in a hearty laugh at Mrs. Ann Thornditch's flowers of rhetoric and impudence! He did not find me, however, in the mood to see the excellence of the joke. I had made up my mind, in fact, and announced it to him with some little vehemence, that might have persuaded him I was in earnest! He should acknowledge me

wife at once, and discard
his presence with
would never see or
arness he endeavoured
He declared there
desirous of than to
of his, who confess
marks of her affect
totally disgusted
six children, the
persons in
claim as hims
paternity. But
stir in the mat
he wished
untenable. Ar
most outrageo
reckless of cons
admitting h
would drive h
vengeance, in whic
would put hi
creditors, whor
by dividin
derived from his fel

, which about enabled him to pay interest
capital of the sum due to them!
favoured Luxmoor with my ideas on his
t, you may imagine, with some energy—
ch that he complimented me on the pos-
n of powers of language which, he said,
qualify me to cut a brilliant figure among
male—*not* feminine—literatæ of the age!
ing was his great art—he is supreme in
n he chooses, and is properly inspired by
alignancy of his feelings. My reply was,
s that was the third day I had not dined,
glad to hear that there might be a possi-
of my earning an honest living independent
noble exertions made by him to maintain
a state of affluence! 'Here's what does
d of everything else, my love!' was his
and he produced a couple of bottles of
ndy from under his great coat! He
d to teach me to drink, too, I verily
e: a drunken woman would have been
r companion, you know, for a drunkard's
. I did not taste his wine, but I renewed
n threat unless he complied with my de-
. He kept drinking on all the time the
l lasted—and it rose so high at last that

appealed to the woman on the staircase. I was treated, openly announcing in wha tion I stood to the man before us. It w that he struck me.

"But, even after all that—even aft blow, which still makes my whole frame t with indignation, and a pain worse than a flesh suffered;—I don't know that I *coul* had the courage to leave him—as it see for ever! Don't you think I must hav this man—this brute, Miss Pomeroy!—v forgave him all this, and had almost patc a reconciliation with him on the sole co that he should order Ann Thornditch neve to make her appearance in his chambers i I soon found he did not keep his word. drank, too; and she came to insult me, o than one occasion, with the assurance t

to pretend to no such thing! She'd let me know!' And once or twice, I narrowly escaped a personal chastisement at her hands, besides a mobbing in the streets. Yet when I complained to Luxmoor, he only laughed; declared he was a sort of clerical Macheath, with a still more incompatible Polly and Lucy; and wished that he was a Mormon Elder, that we might all live harmoniously together!

"I grew weary of insults and hunger, at last. I even began to think that, after all, this mother of 'six small orphanless babes' had the better right, because the prior one, to my spouse! more especially when he crowned all his wickedness by jeeringly telling me that as we were only married by a Catholic priest, in Paris, he, as a sound Protestant, was not of opinion that he was any worse, or better, than a bachelor still! At all events, I should have some little difficulty in proving my marriage, at Cambridge, so as quite to ruin him!—At last, one fine morning when, in some fit of tender inebriation, he had made me a present of a ten-pound note just received from a pupil who, he said—and I thought, with a peculiar intention—had made it a condition that 'Miss Sutcliffe' should at least have a share in

it—that fine morning, (it really was a very one !) I put myself, and the few clothes I c abstract unobservedly from my lodgings, in coach for London.

" It was quite by chance that, in looking my scanty wardrobe for the purpose of selec I lighted on the letter which my father had g me, dying, to present to your mother. I k for he had told me, that in it he recomme me, in the most earnest and solemn term her kindness and protection. He thought the memory of old times would still have degree of influence with her that he needed to die with the conviction that he left me v out a single friend, or kindly overlooker, in world.

" You know the result of my applicatio Lady Mauleverer. But among the Suetts I I imagined, for some time, I had found a se and comfortable asylum. They all liked me much at first—even young Ap Howel, who h me so much now ! My wretch of a husba doings again !—I can hardly tell you how found me out. I know he had Mr. Sca already in some training in his own disso ways at Cambridge. He was not his t

indeed—Dr. Stillcoke was then—but he had met with him at some of the riotous young men's parties, and according to a common trick of his, had him in hand to extract what he could out of him, under pretence of 'putting him up' to university and *gold-tuft* ways! I suppose Mr. Suett must have mentioned me in some nonsensical, wine-flushed prating, after his vacation home; and Luxmoor is so cunning, he speedily identified the governess at Plas Newydd with his stray wife. Particularly, as to obtain your mother's recognition, I was obliged to preserve my real name.

"He wrote to me at once, with all the insolent authority of the relationship he had so perseveringly refused to acknowledge, ordering me to return to him. He threatened all kinds of exposure if I did not!—but my only answer was to inform him that if he drove me to despair, I would rather perish than return to him under the miserable circumstances in which I had left him! I was maddened, and I openly defied him. So he saw that plan was not the right one, and he wrote again to me—the most miserably affecting, penitential letter you would have thought it possible for even so ingenious a

ready, most desirous, openly to ackn
union, forfeit his fellowship, and esca
university and his ponderous inamor
and ever! In fact, my repeated an
tions had reached the ears of people i
and he had now little more than the
resignation, or of a disgraceful exp
crown all, he had discovered, in th
inflicted upon him by my absence,
and wholly he loved me still! Life
was insupportable to him, out of m
and he was determined to come into
rejoin me at every risk. It would
possible means, besides, of breakin
university, while it would afford
desirable seclusion for a time from
cutions of Ann Thornditch and his c

time, unluckily! Well, yielding to my infatuated hopes in his improvement, and fear of the exposure threatened, I was idiot enough to interest myself to get Mr. Luxmoor the vacant tutorship. I was in great favour then with Mrs. Suett, and it was almost a sufficient recommendation to her that he had filled the situation in question in the family of a Marquis! Mr. Scarlatt himself had very favourable impressions already of the person whose claims I advocated. Finally, I was allowed to offer him the situation. And I did so—under conditions every one of which he violated in succession excepting, as I imagined, avowing the relations between us. But I find he has also broken even that!"

"Perhaps he was jealous, Sophia!" I observed, with a feeling that I did not pause to analyze, but a very painful one.

"Jealous! when it was he who first—jestingly in tone, to be sure—drew my attention to the fact of the particular notice taken of me *then* by Mr. Scarlatt—when it was he who urged upon me to endeavour to cultivate my influence over him, so that I might secure him the capital living in the gift of the family!—when he kept stimulating the young man on his improper

course by all sorts of challenges and incentives! Insomuch that I at last took the notion he purposed to get rid of me by thrusting me upon another!—involving me in a criminalty which frees *men* from the obligations they very often, I suppose, come to the conclusion they have injudiciously taken upon themselves! Nor am I convinced to the contrary by the seemingly rebuking declaration he made to Mr. Scarlatt! He is base enough, perhaps, to have expected, by such an avowal, not to turn him from his pursuit, but to render success in it a very costly affair to him, and a means of replenishing his own purse! A bad wife is worth more than a good one sometimes, you know, in England!—But now tell me, darling, do you think it at all likely that for the sake of such a man as Luxmoor, I should have done ought to deserve Sir Vivian's wretched suspicions? I tell you, I had actually bought from him, at the price of all I might earn, the privilege of living unmolestedly at a distance from him with your dear self, when—— but what has really happened between you? I have disguised nothing from you now! Will you not tell me all?"

CHAPTER XIV.

A WEDDING WITHOUT FAVOURS.

And I did tell her all, thoroughly satisfied that my harmful suspicions were unfounded. All, at least, that related to the rash engagement I had entered into. Of course I did not wound Sophia's feelings by any more direct allusion to the opinion entertained of her conduct, towards himself, by Scarlatt. I had even the unkind candour to apologize for Ap Howel's suspicions, by mentioning the offer of his boyish affections he had made me, as if recognizing that an absurd jealousy and spite had prompted his accusations.

Sophia laughed a good deal at the statement. She passed with inconceivable rapidity from one

all her seriousness.

Under the circumstances of our posit was a difficult and invidious effort on he But I must do Sophia the justice to say— ever were her motives—that she expre very great unwillingness to give her appro the hasty resolution we had adopted.

I repeated to her all the arguments S had previously urged to obtain my consent hopelessness of ever winning my father's tion save to what was irrevocable, was the cipal one respecting him. For Scarlatt hi the generosity of his own intentions and tion pleaded, as it seemed, very powerfully her also.

"I did not give him credit for such tr high-toned feeling!" she said. "He is v

reward of so much disinterestedness and honour! But might not the object be accomplished at a less hazard? Do you know that there are very severe penalties for what may well be considered the *abduction* of a girl of your tender age? And your father will take every revenge on the Suetts he can, you may depend!"

"He can disinherit me; and that is enough, I should think. And I should be glad of it!"

"No!" replied Sophia, rather too precipitately, "he cannot! The barony of Mauleverer, and by far the greater portion of the landed property attached to the title, descend even to a female heir. Your father cannot prevent it."

I myself did not know this. It had never occurred to me to feel any curiosity on the subject. I looked at Sophia in some surprise and misgiving—which she perceived and hastened to reassure.

"Your mother honoured me with some confidence when I was at Mauleverer, and she often told me so," was her ingenious falsehood. "But I only mention it now as an additional reason against precipitation. Is not my fate even some warning to women not to place themselves too unreservedly in the power of men? Have you

forgotten the caution I gave you? Unle
regular settlements of your rights ar
for you before marriage, and by very
lawyers too, do you know what the law
land will do for you? It will hand over
possess, or ever may possess, in the way
sonal property, as an *absolute gift* to y
band! And he will have the *sole adm*
tion of any landed property that may
during your life, and after your death
you should happen to leave any children
you!"

"And do you not remember my ans
phia? That I would never wed the ma
I could suspect of such meanness of he
character as to render such precautions
him necessary!"

"Did I suspect Luxmoor?" she a
with a quaint smile. "It is true, I had no
but myself—and how did he treat that p
But now, if I had brought the man a
thousand pounds, he would probably have
me to die a beggar; or, if anything had
from his extravagance, he might hav
as an inheritance to his laundry-woma
bastards!"

It is impossible to tell how indignant I felt at the bare notion of such a comparison! Why did she continue to fret me with this useless opposition? Was it not further to irritate me in my determination?—to stir the half-extinguished embers of jealousy in my heart? Perhaps to convince me still more emphatically of the falsehood of Ap Howel's insinuations!

I did not like these reiterated objections at all. But assuredly it was not the malignant and overbearing spirit of control and distrust which she afterwards denounced that inspired the declaration I made in consequence. I know Sophia has imputed to me the great unhappiness of several of her subsequent years. But with justice? No! Since I had myself loved, since she had persuaded me that she loved Luxmoor, I imagined it impossible in reality to enjoy existence in the absence—least of all in the alienation—of the beloved object. I thought I could effect nothing more truly beneficial and desirable for all parties than a reconciliation between this discordant but still attached husband and wife!

I proposed this to Sophia. I told her that my courage would fail me, unless I had her com-

give me that thenceforth Scarlatt was n
her but the husband of her friend—wc
reconciliation with her own! It wa
arranged that Luxmoor was to accon
All that her just pride and scruples c
mand he had declared himself willing t
with. A public acknowledgment of h
wife, and withdrawal from the universi
put an end to her annoyances from An
ditch. And in all pecuniary respects
could myself provide substantially and
for her, she and her husband should s
Scarlatt and myself whatever means the
of the former's father might place for
our disposal.

I think she was in reality a little afl
my loving earnestness.

"Dear, dear child!" she said tenderl

lation, "than to have—even only in semblance—what we desire? I *will* give you the greatest possible proof it certainly is in my power to afford you, that the hope of blinding gazers to the facts of my comfortless and degrading position with Carolus Luxmoor was the chief motive of my foolish coquetry with Scarlatt Suett; and I *will* be the wife of the worst of husbands again, purely to give your dear heart complete satisfaction—on the conditions you name—or on none!"

The arrangements for our flight were speedily completed. It was agreed that the carriage which was to convey Luxmoor and his pupil to the nearest railway station—then considerably distant—was to wait for Sophia and me also at the Kerig y Drudion.

Thither accordingly, on the following day, at a concerted hour, under pretext of taking a walk together, Sophia and I hastened, each carrying under our cloaks—to wear which the now chilly and misty autumn weather gave us some excuse—a bundle of absolute necessaries in the way of clothing.

We seated ourselves on the stones of the monument, to await the arrival of the vehicle,

during that pause of destiny, with a unknown, but deep and deadly sent dread.

The space of five short weeks had c revolutionized my whole existence! I Mauleverer Castle a headstrong, fearle was now an all-confiding, submissive, woman.

I looked at Sophia. The inexplica quil, fathomless smile of her proto sphinx, was on her countenance!

Chance and my evil star had done f that might otherwise have been the years and of great difficulty, even dang was satisfied.

I was not. I had received a new I had begun to consider all that was precipitated, heedless in my conduct, an

days. Since the hour of my explanation with Scarlatt Suett, he perceived something unusual, doubtless, and that required explanation in my look and demeanour. I knew myself how flushed were my cheeks—what a novel brilliancy lighted my eyes—what a gay and bounding spirit lifted my footsteps wherever I went! And I had encountered Vivian so often that day that I was annoyed with the suspicion of being watched. Nor did he appear to be solitary in his forebodings. That very morning Gelert, after enduring a good deal of neglect certainly, had disappeared from Plas Newydd, as if aware of my intention also to desert it.

Sophia and I were sitting, as I have said, on these mystic stones, when a light footstep struck on our hearing, and the unwelcome presence of the young baronet was obvious to us both, coming from the interior of the Kerig y Drudion. And I remember it struck us both with alarm, when we observed that he carried a pair of pistols, one in each hand. The use of these weapons was, however, habitual with him, and was one of the marked signs of his strong military tastes.

He addressed us with his customary abruptness.

"You are haunted with rather unusual
nacity by your very partial duenna to-day,
Pomeroy," he said, without the caution he
rally observed not to mention my name.

"There is occasion for it, Sir Vivian.
Pomeroy is haunted more pertinaciously
usual by her most eager and presump
lover!" replied Sophia, with smiling bitter

Vivian glanced at me, and he perceived i
blush that his loving secret was betrayed.
a moment his own pale cheek flushed, b
returned the mockery in Sophia's glance
one full of indignation and scorn.

"To be plain with you, then, Madam
cliffe," he said, "I want to speak with
Pomeroy *alone!* and, if you refuse me th
vantage, I must explain to her more clearly
I have yet thought it necessary why you a
most unfit counsellor in the world for a
and virtuous lady!"

"Explain what you will, Sir Vivian,'
replied, with an air of calm defiance, "
Pomeroy is aware that I am the *wife* o
Reverend Carolus Luxmoor. And now
can you say to my disparagement? Hav
you men—you consider yourself a man,

you?—imposed upon us a promise, in the presence of God, to obey our husbands in all things? Well, we can't always honour you, you know; but we *can* always obey you!"

He was silent for a moment with surprise, while Sophia, coolly taking off her left-hand glove, allowed him to perceive that she now wore a plain gold ring on the third finger.

"Well, after all, there is nothing very amazing in it!" Vivian replied, drawing a long breath. "For a witch to make a match of it with Old Nick himself was nothing very astonishing in the middle ages, however!" Then turning to me, he exclaimed in eager and excited tones, "But why are you here with this bad, bad woman, Miss Pomeroy—all the worse if she is in reality under some lawful bond to yonder wretch, Scarlatt Suett's worthy tutor?"

"Allow me to tell you, Sir Vivian!" replied Sophia, yielding to the excess of her exasperation at these words—"Miss Pomeroy is waiting here for the vehicle which is to convey her and her duenna and her affianced bridegroom, and his tutor, Old Nick, to Gretna Green—where Love, you know, laughs at jealous rivals and angry papas alike, till his little sides are like to burst!"

"Is this so, Hugh-Helena?" he said, and t deep, melancholy, though still boyish tones se even now to echo in my heart.

"Yonder is the carriage! Four of the ow of Howel Mynydd's best horses dashing in it, give the more pomp and circumstance to d departure hence! What did you expect to s that you stare so amazed? A chariot drawn fiery dragons?—A lame boy would not speed overtake even so commonplace a conveyance a donkey-cart might have been!" pursued Soph vengefully pointing to the approaching vehicle.

"Lead, winged with fire, can, though!" plied Vivian, with a glance at his pistols, t struck me with the deepest terror; and cocked them both on the word with a simul neous action of his nervy fingers. I now int posed—

"What do you mean, Sir Vivian?" I claimed, angrily. "I am going away from P Newydd by my own will and pleasure! Wh control have you over my movements?"

"Why, what madness inspires you, Hug Helena?" he returned, gazing at me with whole imploring soul in his eyes. "Have t persuaded you that you are abandoned by y

father because so long a delay has taken place? —Know then that I have just received a letter from him!—that he is at Mauleverer!—that he has been delayed by being out yachting on the Mediterranean.—But such is his hatred and contempt of the people here, that he will not come to Plas Newydd, even to retrieve a child whom he loves so dearly, as it is plain to me now he loves you, for he has travelled day and night, without ceasing, since he received Miss Sutcliffe's letter. He authorises *me* to assure you of his forgiveness, and to escort you at once home to Mauleverer—in this woman's company, he says; but that cannot be, knowing what I know of her! And, O Hugh-Helena, Hugh-Helena!" he added, with wild eagerness, producing a letter. "Look what your father says, besides!—That he hopes I will endeavour to make myself of as much importance to you in the office as possible, for that nothing would give him more satisfaction than to have an Ap Howel for a *son-in-law!*"

Sophia laughed aloud; and when she chose her laugh was like the fluttering of winged serpents round your head, stinging without alighting!

"You can tell him, if he is so anx
son-in-law of distinguished name, th
have one of his own! It needs only
permission to change Suett into Por
the nobleman of nature's making wi
one of the herald's manufacture!"
scarcely pausing in her scornful mirth

"In God's name, Hugh-Helena, do
to diabolical suggestion, or at least re
decisive resolution until you have
counsel of your father—of your fond
mother!"

"You mean, until your proposed
law has had time to make Miss Pome
in Chancery—and to make it someth
short of high treason to look at her
order from a master in that right
and rather slow-going court!" Sop
"However, I must not have you t
charge; she has need of all her best
coolness at present! Or have you
notion, Miss Pomeroy, of returning
sand times stricter captivity and sur
Mauleverer Castle, until you mak
mind to wed this last of a used-up r
of the founder of a vigorous ne

If not, I shall wave my handkerchief to hasten our friends to the rescue!—Tut, Sir Vivian, you will not frighten me with your popguns!—You might hit me with your crossbow; but I should think you would miss a mountain with weapons so modern as these!"

"Base woman!—but they were not meant for you!" returned the lad, with a gloomy glare in the direction of the now near vehicle. Sophia continued to wave her handkerchief defyingly—and in a few instants the speed of the four splendid horses, which it was part of the elder Suett's state to exhibit on any occasion of family display, conveyed his eldest son and his tutor to the spot.

Scarlatt leaped out of the vehicle instantly, and approached me—without even observing Vivian in his first eagerness of triumph and love. "Dearest! all is right! All is well! I am already the happiest of men!" And he clasped me with rapturous delight in his arms, and was about to hasten with me to the carriage when he suddenly confronted Vivian.

There was that in the young lad's murky visage, which for a moment made Scarlatt pause, and almost relinquish his hold of me.

"What the devil do you mean, Sir Vivian?" he said, after a moment's startled consideration. "Are you here to murder me . . . like an assassin and a coward . . . after all your fine talk of being a soldier and a gentlemen?"

"No!" replied the boy, with stern concision. "Take one of my weapons, and go with me a few paces into the cavern before us! Whichever of us comes out alive will then be rid of what must else prove, in a worse manner, a mortal foe!"

"You must be mad! What mortal foe am I to you, boy?" returned Scarlatt in undisguised astonishment, and declining with a gesture the offered arm.

Vivian was silent for an instant, while his forehead rose in veiny corrugations with the workings of internal agitation. He spoke at last. "This young lady is Lord Mauleverer's daughter—she is confided to my protection by her father—and though she is herself ignorant of the fact—our grandfathers, who were jovial companions and friends, promised us to each other in the cradle, at a time when I was not a beggar nor she an heiress! *You* have cajoled her into forgetfulness of the duty she owes her

family, and the nobility of her blood, and would lure her into a disgraceful elopement, and union with yourself! This shall not be!—Let her leave this place at once with me, or take this weapon and pass with her on your way over my dead body!"

We were all silent and at a standstill with amazement.

"So you want to fight a duel with me, do you?" said Scarlatt, at last. "*Or is this mere bravado, because you know that I have always condemned the practice as a barbarism of the past, and declared that I would never raise my hand in a private quarrel?*"

I own these words did not affect me pleasingly, though I was quaking but a moment before with terror, lest any harm should befall my lover from the wild lad's menaces.

"Then you are A COWARD!—and I have always thought you one!" was the passionate rejoinder.

Scarlatt's usually florid complexion grew of a perfectly bloodless hue; a much more fearful demonstration of internal feeling than the darkest flush. But he made no other observation than turning to inquire of me, "Are you

ready, dearest? Will you come?—The
crazy!"

"I will come!—O Vivian, would you
mit a murder? What are you staring
What are you thinking of?" I ejaculated
gliding between the fearful boy and his adv
I ventured to lay both my hands on his k
grasp, and sink the weapons gradually dow

"A murder?" he repeated vacantly
almost like a person rousing from a pert
opium slumber. "He will not defend h
then! And this is the man you have c
for a husband, daughter of a hundred b
branded chevaliers!—No matter, no matt
answer me but one question. Do you
love this man, after what you have seen?"

"With my whole soul, with my whole h
I replied, anxious to deprive him of all fi
incentive to interference.

"He is your husband then in the sig
God!" he answered, with a wild and ha
look. "Let him become so also in the sig
man—in my sight—before you leave this
—and I am content! Your honour will th
assured: but these men are base enou
place even that at their mercy!"

"What do you mean?" inquired Scarlatt, with irrepressible amazement.

"This grinning jackal, Luxmoor, is yet a priest!—these stones support what was once a temple! Be united by such formulas as he should have at command, in my presence, and go in peace! Otherwise I will kill the first man—or the first woman even!—who dares to attempt removing Miss Pomeroy from my protection!"

"I have heard that the Ap Howels have been mad for generations, though they have never been placed in strait-waistcoats! You are keeping up the charter, Sir Vivian! but upon my honour, I have not the slightest objection to the plan!" said Scarlatt, laughing, though scarcely with the satisfaction he announced.

"It is so much time gained—and making assurance doubly sure—though that is no great advantage when we are forging the chains of Hymen!" said the horrid Luxmoor, with a peculiar leer at his wife. "Yet for my own part too, I have no objection to make, though we are scarcely going to work canonically, I fear! You always carry your father's prayer-book with you, I know, Sophia, as an amulet against the

old gentleman! We shall manage it!—Have at you, my hearties!"

And this unreverend clerk began to mutter the matrimonial service from a little, old, crumpled book Sophia handed to him, while we all walked, in a strange kind of mechanical obedience, under the stones of the ancient temple of human sacrifice. It was a fitting one in which to make an English wife!

END OF VOL. I.

J. Billing, Printer and Stereotyper, Guildford, Surrey.

MAULEVERER'S DIVORCE

A STORY OF WOMAN'S WRONGS.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF

"WHITEFRIARS," "THE CITY BANKER," &c.

"Laws are that make the crimes that they condemn:
They have judged us; now let us judged of them!"—*L'Estrange.*

"Pelican's food, pelican's food, my masters! with mine own beal
rend my breast, and ye feed at the scatterings."—*A. Marlowe.*

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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MAULEVERER'S DIVORCE;

A STORY OF WOMAN'S WRONGS.

CHAPTER I.

A RUNAWAY MATCH.

I HAVE dwelt, perhaps, at too great length on the series of chances and contrivances that led to my very early and imprudent marriage. But these are not unnecessary preliminaries to the story of its barbarous and unjust dissolution. There is scarcely a particular I have recorded but throws some dark illuminating ray on th futurity in store for me!

I shall hasten, however, over all that seem to me of minor importance in the progress o events towards my great catastrophe.

Immediately after that strangely impromptue ceremony of union between Scarlatt Suett an myself, at the Kerig y Drudion, he led me to th carriage in waiting for us. Sophia and Luxmoc followed. Sir Vivian disappeared as soon as th abrupt ceremonial was brought to a conclusion And though it was very difficult to imagine tha such could be the case, Scarlatt at once declare his object in insisting on its performance wa an expectation that it would induce us to dela our flight, either until Lord Mauleverer coul have time to arrive at Plas Newydd, or com upon us in pursuit. Such a marriage with minor might easily be set aside! It was, there fore, more than ever necessary to hasten ou flight into Scotland. He had only assented t what had been done, because, armed as the la was, and evidently seized with a fit of insanity, h must have hazarded his life to take his weapo from him, and could not, besides, answer fo what he might have done to the "young devil himself, in the event of a struggle!

We proceeded accordingly, at the utmost po

sible speed of horse and rail, into Scotland, and went through the degrading, farcical ceremony of a marriage in the border style of celebration —if celebration it can be called—in the presence of the two Luxmoors. I remember with what a deep feeling of humiliation and shame I found myself standing before a great, raw-boned Scotchman, who looked infinitely more like a Highland drover than a priest, and smelt of tobacco and whiskey all around, on the tile-paved floor of a toll-bar hovel—listening to an assurance that I was as firmly married as if all the bishops in England had assisted in the operation!—really with one of unutterable dismay and disgust! But so the brawny forger of hymeneal chains declared to me, no doubt observing my consternation; while Luxmoor laughed, and, with his inexpressibly offensive leer, observed—but I will not repeat what he observed!

But for my previous marriage, by some formula of the Established Church, I do not think that I should have deemed myself married at all! No friends—no smiling father—no tear-glistening mother there!—the whole vulgar, hasty rite appeared to me an unblest profanation—the buffoon mockery of a sacred ceremonial! There

was an inexpressible despondency and melancholy in my heart, as we made for the little neighbouring inn, where we were at length to rest from our long and fatiguing journey. I am convinced that had not Sophia been with me to dispel the terror and gloomy feelings—the presentiments!—that gathered round me, and all the bewildering passion and tenderness and cajolery of Scarlatt could have induced me to regard him as a veritable husband, until some more holy and solemn rite had declared him so.

What a divinely beautiful evening it was, too! What a sunset of polished gold shone over the whole sky, as we stepped in at our little hostel door to partake of such repast as Luxmoor's zealous purveyance had been enabled to secure us!

How comes it that I recall, almost with my organs of sense, the rich perfume of the honeysuckle and sweetbriar that clustered over the doorway of the rustic inn?—The wild screechy drone of a bagpipe, played to divert us at dinner by a wandering old fellow with a hard visage, weather-stained and many-hued as the coarse plaid he wore, seems still to vibrate on my ears!—The

l-furnished, but not unsavoury repast of ham nd eggs, though it vainly wooed my appetite, on the high and substantial commendations of e epicure Luxmoor. And, though tears were ntinually springing to my eyes, and from the pths of my heart, I remember no banquet at ich I have since sat where the talk surpassed joyous hilarity the triumphant gaiety of my e commensals! Never was Sophia's display wit more brilliant; but it was like one of works, that diffuse splendour without light! d when she and I were alone after the repast, an well recollect that we sobbed in one ther's arms as if our parting was to be for e disastrous doom. There was no good n in her words as she left me, indeed! ou are *twice* a wife, dearest! What are talking about?" she exclaimed. "*Twice a e!*—and I can tell you, there comes a time a good number of married folks—there was with me not so very long ago—before you nciled poor dear Luxmoor and myself so ghtfully!—when they consider themselves a e too much married with being so once!"

And thus, by her own headstrong, unreasoning of devotion, did the heiress of Mauleverer

place herself, and all that might be hers, u
servedly in the power of a husband!—A
which in so many other instances, has been
only distinction from a professed and open
lager and oppressor!

Yet Scarlatt could persuade me that
rejoiced chiefly in our stolen marriage, bec
he believed that, for aught besides myself
the nobility of birth to which our union a
him, he must remain dependent on my fath
forgiveness and favour! He could convince
that he felt grieved rather than exultant in
information I thought I gave him—that it
not so; that my girlish Cinderella fancy w
be realised, and that I brought him the do
of a peerage and of the large landed propert
my ancestry!

And yet there was something in his reply
thoroughly chilled my fond enthusiasm, wh
told him this. "No, sweetest!" he said;
cannot hope to share your honours unles
achieve a political position of my own, and
demand it of a ministry! And you must
think I shall content myself with being
mere husband and satellite, shining with reflec
light, even of my adored and beautiful baron

You know I am your *lord* and master in theory! I shall not be happy until I am so in reality!—I mean, so far as regards the first!"

Not happy then!—not happy until a gewgaw sound was added to his name!

Scarlatt wrote from this Scottish inn what I imagined was the first revelation of my true identity to his mother; and thence we continued our wedding excursion. Partly with a view to concealment, partly because my admiration of the writings of Scott made his favourite ground the most tempting possible to me—into the Highlands.

The two Luxmoors were still in our party. Indeed, I would not listen to the suggestion Sophia made, that we ought to part company, in order to mislead or distract pursuit. I could not bear the thought of parting from her! She was my last firm hold on the past; the last assurance I possessed, that in yielding to my tenderness for Scarlatt Suett, I had not done a rash—almost an inexcusable thing!

She had an infinitude of arguments, of reasoning, to satisfy my now perpetually resurging doubts on this point. It was not that my love for my husband was not yet more absorbing

impassioned, all-concentrating than that I h
borne for my lover! But comprehension of t
social fault I had committed dawned upon me i
a thousand unexpected lights, and I needed th
constant support of Sophia's defying and mutin
ous genius, to feel satisfied that I had not to
far overstepped worldly rules of right by so bol
a stride!

Hitherto she had carefully veiled from m
inexperience, as well as from the observation o
persons who had reason to consider themselv
infinitely more skilled in such science, the re
and strong characteristics of her mind and cha
racter.

Never was there an intellect more audacious
questioning, less disposed to submit to the re
ceived maxims of society, than her's! There
was, if I may so express myself, a *topsy-turvi
ness* in her notions of things, which she ex
pressed in an infinite variety of paradoxical, dis
orderly, extremely witty and entertaining forms
She was at war, in her secret heart, with all the
established regulations of the world! They were
all unfavourable to her projects;—condemned
her to an obscurity from which she was deter
mined, at every cost, to emerge; met and con

er with inimical visages at every step of
ious career; and even now they stand
er, motionless but avenging spectres,
ome day raise their arms of stone, and
yet in her hour of highest vainglory
ss!

in the tone of Sophia's conversation,
ught to have dreaded, excited only my
nd amusement, so brilliantly did the
lazzle my understanding, to lose sight
rthless broken-bottle material of all
ing glitter of diamonds! The sarcastic
ng edge to her remarks did not dis-
stener who, although the heiress of an
d high-placed race, cherished such wild
ored notions as those of my girlhood.
all this was but theory; in practice no
be more observant of the words and
f superiors than Sophia. These were
s she chiefly worked with to her own
; but no doubt they required a watch-
id enslavement of her proud self-will,
ien occasion served, she retaliated with
n of fearful interest.

in fairness admit, Sophia possessed
liant qualities that ustly entitled her

to—and have in a degree obtained for
higher admiration than that of an inexp
girl, to whom the reality of things was
known to detect what was exaggerated
in a witty mockery. There were profoun
in that gulfing, shifting-sanded intellect
of ruin though they were! And the err
of her wit at times warned from the q
when it was not engaged in the more c
task of misleading into it. With me, t
a solitary and neglected childhood had co
cated a sombre tinge to the ideas, the
dance of Sophia's was always a welcome

But the spell of spells with this mi
darker arts than ever magician or necr
boasted, lay in persuading me that she m
reciprocated my affections; that she l
with the devotion and entirety my own
of feeling ever demanded from its
Almost an orphan, and alone from th
I now believed I had found the most e
qualities of all the female relationship
forfeited, or had ever known, in thi
whom my own heart had chosen by a
natural sympathy from the first. My na
trustful as well as loving, and expande

r of a deep cup, to receive those palmy
of love and sisterly tenderness that seemed
til from heaven itself into it.
d was all this celestial show, on Sophia's
nly a beauteous but unreal phantasma-
Could it be that she hated me always—
s now—when she has injured me farther
l her own forgiveness than even mine?
e in reality envy me my superior fortunes
; periods when she knew well that my
lelight in their actual possession would
en to share them with herself?—With-
ring Scarlatt—for I am persuaded she
oved him—did she grudge me that excess
ionate affection he evinced, and doubtless
: me, on the first period of our union?
ill cherishing a species of insane idolatry
libertine husband, did her accursed and
ess spirit of coquetry already suggest to
atisfaction to be derived from depriving
the affections of mine?
surely this notion would have been too
ure! I am even of opinion that Sophia
was wearied of the weaving of so many
trigues, and inclined at length to rest from
g snares out of her own finest filaments

as well as those of all around her. Perhaps, if her husband had not been, what in the bitterness of her heart she had called him, "the most worthless of his worthless sex," she might have taken place thenceforward among the better of her own! I do not dispute that there were the roots of good, generous, even magnanimous qualities in her, that might have produced flowers and fruit but for the blasting of a bad man's association, which distilled poisons into the plant at almost every stage of its development. But besides she must have discerned that, at that period, I was fixed beyond the possibility of being shaken, in the core of my young husband's strongest passions and ambitious impulses! It is very possible also that her own feelings indisposed her to any attempt upon him at the time. I have reason to think that however profoundly wounded and irritated her vanity might be, her sentiments towards Scarlatt were of a contemptuously hostile order, at this juncture; and that even she! could not have feigned so much to the contrary as would have been necessary in returning on her forsaken tack. Moreover, if ever she really loved anyone, it was Luxmoor; and they were now in the honey-

moon of a reconciliation, which, with persons of their capricious but vehement passions, was probably not greatly declined from the glow of the first of love.

At all events, she suffered no emotion that could have roused misgiving to appear on the surface. The most jealous scrutiny must have been foiled or quieted by the perfect, joyous ease of her demeanour in our society, throughout our whole bridal trip, when so much must have occurred to excite painful feelings, had she cherished any on account of the disastrous triumph I had achieved. In his eagerness to show his devotion to me, and utter renunciation of all sentiments calculated to cause me uneasiness, Scarlatt was even occasionally—and painfully to myself was it visible—almost rude in his neglect of Sophia! The delirium of exultation he indulged in over his success in achieving a bride to whom he imputed such overwhelming advantages, personal as well as social, could not have been pleasing to her! She must have been wearied with his endless effusions of admiration, and the constant absorption of his thoughts and attentions upon one whom she probably looked upon, in her secret heart, as a silly, rash, head-

strong schoolgirl. His perpetual appeals to share these bridegroom transports, mus been irksome to any woman! "Is sh beautiful, *Mrs. Luxmoor?*—is she not, And am I not the very happiest happy fel the world?" resounded continually in her Her praises were claimed for every g smile, expression of mine! In a manne extorted, though the wonderful patienc dexterity of Sophia never allowed her wea and possible reluctance of assent, to app the seemingly playful spontaneity and en asm of her replies.

It was fagging work, however, I doubt —and thence possibly her insinuations c advantages of parting companies for a But she dared not press her wish, I now t under the notion she might awaken in m picions that her feelings towards Scarlat rendered the sight of our happiness dista to her.

She and her husband, therefore, accomp us throughout our tour in the Highland of us, of course, under assumed names. moor even took the fancy to distribute R titles of nobility among us; and at most o

places we either astonished the secluded
nts by gabbling among ourselves a wilder
than their own, compounded of several
es, which they took to be the best St.
urgh Sclavonic, or by speaking English
excess of refinement and purity almost
gn.

all his bad qualities, and total want of
feeling, Luxmoor abundantly supported
utation for intellectual ability, in this
nd more habitual intercourse. There
such thing as *ennui* in the company of
erend Carolus! His flow of spirits was
stible; he abounded in striking and
ecdote, and could throw the most sur-
and unexpected illustrations on almost
bject he touched. How could so much
e so vilely allied to so much vice? And,
im but bare justice, notwithstanding his
brutality under the influence of liquor,
ature seemed to be a marked character-
his singular composition when not.
ring this time of our association, Sophia's
e protected him from very frequent or
uous yielding to his most degrading

habit. But when he did succumb to it in a noticeable degree, he showed the cloven foot ve plainly, certainly. The sensuality of his natu and ideas then glowed out in a thousand ind scribable emanations—and a furnace seeme suddenly opened where all was cool and orderl before!

The reconciliation I had effected between him and his wife had all the appearance of being complete and permanent. Luxmoor declared that it was equivalent to a new bridal with him, and that he loved his Sophia better than he had ever loved her before! Yet, truth to say, the exhibitions of this tenderness were not always of the most refined order, and, in my opinion, sometimes excited her deep though silent disgust. And at times, in fact, they resembled a burlesque of the youthful bridegroom ardour and enthusiasm of Scarlatt that annoyed me too!—A dance of the blooming, rose-wreathed Hours executed by leering hamadryads! I am not assured, however, that Sophia instituted comparisons to Scarlatt's advantage in this. She had intellect and taste to have rendered Luxmoor's behaviour, on occasions, disgusting to

: but her heart was not chaste. Nor
her temperament that of a Lucretia!
o not wrong her in saying so. She has
ed it.

ery rarely, however, was a shade of chagrin
allowed to appear on Sophia's countenance.
was gay always: the life and cheer of the
. Once or twice only I detected something
r glance at me of thoughtful and even sor-
l, that puzzled and a little startled me! But
xpression vanished almost as soon as I
t it—and an increase of gaiety on the con-
usually left me no pretext for asking the
ng of those momentary revelations of the
relaxing from its tedious stand to arms.
these were the very occasions when she
the reins on the neck of laughter, and
ed in the wildest caprices of her variable
ntastic wit. Luxmoor had a peculiar skill
ying into her hands in these moods: her
s was, in fact, of his training and tutelage:
wn was the robust athlete whose strong
es and knotted limbs are set in a variety of
lt attitudes, more effectually to display the
of the lighter harlequin who vaults on his
lers, or quivers in some almost impossible

reversed position, crown to crown, on hi
jutor in the air! And his suggestive o
tions were often as torches thrust into a
of stalactite, in Sophia's rich imaginatic
lighted up the particoloured splendors
instantaneously as thought!

Our whole excursion, including in it s
of the excitement and bewilderment of an
was thus also one of the gayest of revels!
abounded with us. Luxmoor was the
caterers; he was in his most natural
feasting and merrymaking; no man w
more perfectly skilled than this luxurious
every provocative of appetite—in promot
pleasures of the table! He had studie
sciences, but often declared he was weary
all but this one! Scarlatt and I, abso
each other and in our love as we were, co
but acknowledge that in sparing us so
though necessary a diligence, Luxmoor
invaluable addition to the party.

When, in addition to all these elem
satisfaction, we add the contemplation
grandest and most striking objects of
associated with the most romantic and
recollections genius had as it were colou

the very atmosphere of the scenes we visited—in spite of our dread of my father's pursuit, time sped with us on rapid and nigh shadowless wings. It is true that only in Sophia could I discover any real and intimate sympathy in the feelings awakened in me by the visual presence of those scenes I had so often traversed in the charmed pages of the great Scottish romancer. Luxmoor laughed at the bare notion of enthusiasm on such a subject, and professed an almost total ignorance in the matter. He had never read any novel save the Golden Ass of Apuleius, in Greek, he said, and—perhaps making a jest of my ignorance—*that*, for the sake of the excellent morals it inculcated! Scarlatt was perfectly familiar with the works in question; but he took so cold an interest in my enthusiasm, that somehow or other it always chilled in his presence. I believe he had no particular relish for a genius that had gone so much to restore the prestige of the past. He was a man of the future, he considered! But he accounted for his indifference by declaring that the dry substantialities of the studies he had pursued, to qualify him for the duties of a statesman, allowed him not to derive enjoyment from any purely fanciful source. In my love

and admiration for him, in those days, I could not, and did not, suspect that he lacked a quality for which the possession of all the statistics in the world hardly indemnifies the man who aspires to lead and govern men—imagination.

CHAPTER II.

ABROAD.

I HAD been soothed all along by assurances that my father would be sure to forgive what he knew to be irrevocable, and that a general reconciliation would be the happy and natural result of the alliance I had contracted. "Fathers always forgive," Sophia repeatedly observed with a laugh—"when they can't help themselves!"

Mine was then an exception—and a very remarkable one. A communication awaited us, at an appointed spot on our tour, from Mrs. Suett, that clearly indicated so. It declared besides, in the most extravagant terms, her own and her husband's enthusiastic approbation of the choice their son had made. It enlarged upon

the wonderful relief Scarlatt's letter had
herself from a terrible apprehension sh
she entertained at first that the elope
with Sophia! She, on her part, she sai
could nor would ever have forgiven hi
derogation as that! He could not hav
even average good looks, after he had s
beauty really was, for such an act of fc
young Sir Vivian, who brought the
"having spied us all huddling into the c
and who conducted himself in a ver
manner throughout the affair, "laughing
thing one said," insisted he was perfectl
if there was an elopement at all in th
was between Scarlatt and the younger M
cliffe! And he invited Mrs. Suett t
pursuit, but in such a queer, jeering s
for a long time she thought he was onl
and of course never thought of taking hi
Besides, Scarlatt was of age, and no on
right or the power to hinder him from
whom he chose, and his firmness and de
tion in whatever course he took, she knew
dissuasion hopeless! But to crown all,
Suett expressed himself pleased that his
had the spirit and good sense to get a

foolish notions his mother had reared him in, so far as to marry a wife for beauty or sense only! He only hoped that Scarlatt had the cleverness to take them both together in my person, whom he should rejoice beyond measure to receive as a daughter-in-law! He forbade all pursuit—and Mrs. Suett confessed herself to be much reconciled by the hope that her "darling, sweet Helen" really might, after all, be the favoured one! Indeed she could not doubt it, "if her son had eyes in his head!" So they were all getting a little more composed at Plas Newydd, when of a sudden they were startled out of their wits by the arrival of the "Right Honourable Lord Mauleverer" in person!

And now, to the Suetts' great surprise, it turned out there was some secret-acquaintance between his lordship and Sir Vivian! Mrs. Suett knew the two old grandfathers used to be great cronies, but had no notion of this acquaintanceship. Instead of asking for herself or any other member of the family, Lord Mauleverer inquired only for Sir Vivian, whom, it seemed he had been expecting for a whole day at "the castle," until losing patience he had come over in person to inquire the meaning of the delay. For it came

out afterwards that his lordship was aware his daughter was living at Plas Newydd, under her assumed name, but disdained them all too much to come for her himself; and so had sent word to "his young friend" to escort Miss Pomeroy home! Sir Vivian had then to drag himself in—very reluctantly evidently—Mrs. Suett herself had seen him going to the reception room, looking more dead than alive!—and confess how "beautifully we had done the meddlesome young gentleman by bolting at once!" And moreover—what Mrs. Suett herself had never for a moment suspected!—Sir Vivian was now obliged to avow to his lordship that he knew I was clandestinely married to Mr. Scarlatt Suett, by the family tutor, the Reverend Carolus Luxmoor, having been himself a witness to a marriage between him and the young lady who resided at Plas Newydd as the sister of Sophia Sutcliffe and a nursery governess. "At a time, no doubt," said Mrs. Suett, in her letter, "when he thought he was *finishing up* Scarlatt's chances of rising in the world, by helping to marry him to a girl without birth or money! For he always disliked you, my dear boy, I know! God knows why! I am sure I could never understand it! And so,

I suppose, you played the joke off upon him of inviting him to be a witness to what he must have thought would prove your ruin, whereas, you were marrying, as it turns out, the most beautiful young heiress in the world!"

But Mrs. Suett confessed she thought Sir Vivian had exerted himself to soothe Lord Mauleverer's really dreadful exasperation on the discovery. Hearing a tremendous ringing of the bell, and a stranger's voice uttering shocking imprecations, she had herself hastened into the apartment, and found Sir Vivian assuring Lord Mauleverer that he did not believe in any premeditated conspiracy "among the Suetts!"—that the affair was strictly a lovematch between the young couple—and that nothing could now be done but to endeavour to pardon them for the fault they had committed—and obviate as much as possible any evil consequences that might arise from the precipitation and indiscretion of the whole proceeding, to Miss Pomeroy.

All reason and persuasion were, however, vain, Mrs. Suett declared. The moment she appeared his lordship "flew at her." She could not have thought it possible a nobleman could have put himself in such a "flusteration" about anything.

But seeing's believing! Yet she had never "
eyes" on a man that looked so like a lord befor
So savage—so mad-like too! He glared a
like the sign of the Saracen's Head, with his h
flying about in the same way, and his eyes
out of his head, and sparkling as if they had
dust in them! It frightened her almost out
senses to see what a taking his lordship w
Luckily John Thomas was away at his c
house, so that "them two fiery spirits w
asunder;" and Mrs. Suett declared
through the interview in the most c
style possible, on her own part, though
felt herself half-a-dozen times goi
hysterics!

Not that she was frightened by h
threats and furious demand, that
should be instantly surrendered
denunciation of the whole family
of conspirators, or his declaratio
immediately call in the aid of th
her son, and Miss Sutcliffe,
parson who pretended to h
marriage between his daug
famous deluder, brought to
guilty of the abduction and

he tenderest years! Mrs. Suett knew
innocence, and was not dismayed!
owned she was fairly turned topsy-
he discovery of who I really was, and
ity that her dear boy had connected
a manner so worthy of what he must
ng run rise to be," she knew as well
sun makes day!
she could do to conciliate Lord Mau-
in vain. In vain she assured him
of the family—not her son himself,
d—was in the least aware of his
real name or rank while resident
wydd. If it was so, the young people
ged it entirely between themselves,
nd her husband had been kept all
e dark! But John Thomas, she was
l be willing to do everything in his
make all straight again." Her son
eggar!—no rascally fortune-hunter,
d to tell his lordship!—he would
e worth his share in half a million of
He was, besides, as handsome a young
ere was in England, though she said
ould not!—and as accomplished as

any nobleman in the land! All was in vain! Lord Mauleverer forgot himself so far as to tell Mrs. Suett, that the entire family was a nest of swindlers, and that he would bring them—one and all—to justice, with their principal, "the broad-shouldered flunkey fellow," whom she called her son! — and he left the house, breathing vengeance and destruction like a madman, and declaring that he would pursue Scarlatt Suett to the ends of the earth to obtain justice upon him! Mrs. Suett plaintively added he had put it into young Sir Vivian's head to think they had done him, too, some grievous wrong, by denouncing them as the robbers and pillagers of the Ap Howel property also, and vowing he would compel them to disgorge their plunder there to the last penny!

Sir Vivian accompanied his lordship to his horse. But he seemed not at all enticed from his old friends by the "nasty attempt" to sow dissension with them! He came back shortly afterwards, and exhorted Mrs. Suett to lose no time in writing to warn her son and *daughter in-law*, that Lord Mauleverer was going at once before a magistrate to take out a warrant for the

arrest of the former, on a charge of abduction and would, no doubt, set an immediate pursuit in motion.

It was evident Sir Vivian had kept the secret of our intended visit to Scotland. Indeed, his conduct throughout the whole transaction threw upon him a lustre of generosity and devotedness that affected me more than I dare now seek words to say! But the warning was not to be despised! We had certainly taken a very circuitous course, and precautions that gave hopes of baffling, for a while, even so exasperated a pursuit. But the penalties of a possible disruption of the ties between us, of the heavy punishment the law might see fit to visit upon Scarlatt, which Luxmoor now placed before us in very strong colours, were too formidable for us to slight the notice we had received. A council of war among us, hastily summoned, came to the decision that it was necessary for Scarlatt and myself to proceed immediately to the continent; and, this resolved, Luxmoor announced that it was impossible for him to accompany us, as he had, unhappily, left some little accounts unpaid in France and Germany,

besides having pressing business in England where he was in hourly expectation that one of his patrons would have a living vacant, for which he intended to be a suitor.

I was now myself willing enough to dispense with Luxmoor's company, for he had of late given way greatly more than at first, to freedom of language and manners which disliked exceedingly. But I had the selfishness —or the blind affection, was it?—to hope that Sophia would continue to bear us company awhile. She convinced me, however, that it would be to hazard all the progress she flattered herself she had made in bringing her husband back to a sense of his duties to herself and to society! And I felt it would be egotistical and wrong to persevere with a view solely to the gratification of my own feelings. We parted accordingly, at an obscure Scottish seaport, whence Scarlatt and I embarked for Hamburgh, with the sincerest sorrow and reluctance on my part; on Sophia's, with, at all events, every appearance of the same.

And yet—I know not how it was—but when we were once quit of the society of Luxmoor

and his wife, both my husband and myself seemed to breathe freelier!

* * * *

We resided upwards of three years abroad, in compelled, though apparently voluntary, exile.

During all this period, it was impossible to hope that any change had taken place in my father's vindictive feelings and resolves against my husband.

We heard so from many sources—the most direct being from young Ap Howel, who, it appeared, continued a visitor at Mauleverer during his vacations, and dropped intimations to Mrs. Suett, from time to time, of the state of opinion there, exceedingly discouraging to our hopes. I should have mentioned that, by a strange perversity, Lord Mauleverer resided almost constantly on his estate since the time of his return after my flight. And when she had no longer the consolation of her child's society to expect, my mother was permitted to return from her long continental exile. She was now, however, a confirmed invalid, and rarely left Mauleverer, even when my father, as he now sometimes did, gave a short attendance on parliament.

Everything announced a confirmed irreconcileableness on his part. Both Scarlatt and myself, in vain, made every possible attempt to win some sign of forgiveness. From Rome my husband addressed his new father-in-law, for the first time, in an epistle the tone of which I secretly but strongly disapproved, without liking to suggest my reasons for the disapproval. I thought, among other things, that he threw too much of the blame of what had happened upon *me!* He himself considered it necessary to apologise for that obvious feature in the document, by saying that my father would certainly much more readily pardon his child for everything, than a person whose family he disliked, and who he might consider had surreptitiously deprived him of the "comfort of his age."

This sounded to me a very commonplace phrase indeed, but I had not then learned to suspect that Scarlatt's ideas all ran in grooves, and that established phrases were, consequently, the ones he chiefly delighted in and employed. But, to say truth, I was not much pleased to find my husband's disinterested affection for me demonstrated by the assertion that up to the moment when I stood before "the altar of

heaven with him" (where, by the bye, I had never stood!) and it was necessary to sign my name to the certificate of our union, he had not dreamed I was other than the Helena Sutcliffe I announced myself on my arrival at Plas Newydd! He added he should never else have had the presumption to raise his eyes to a young lady so much above him in so many important respects! Above all, in splendour, purity, and antiquity of blood; though he hoped that the great wealth possessed by his own family, and the considerable fortune designed for his immediate use by his father, would protect him from any suspicion of mercenary views in forming the alliance!

My husband therefore ventured, he said, to hope that his earnest overtures for a reconciliation might meet with a favourable acceptance. And he proceeded to propose terms even of a degrading humility and submission, I thought, anxious as I had become to bring about such a result! He himself—he stated—was a far different man from his father! Their notions, on almost all points, social and political, were opposed! He had the highest reverence for the present constitution of things in free and happy Britain,

tion of an agrarian confiscation, adopted by the popular agitators a "Repeal of the C Laws,"—his principles were decidedly conse tive! He hoped, indeed, that on no poli point should he have the misfortune to be fo at variance with my father! Could it hap so, he should have so much diffidence of his judgment, in opposition to one so superior, he should be afraid to act upon it! His fa had promised to resign his seat in parliam which, if Lord Mauleverer kindly united his rest to that of his own family, would be sec to himself beyond competition. And in pa ment he should have no object but to assis the best manner his limited abilities permi in carrying out my father's political views, in thus endeavouring to repair, as much as *now* possible, the great injury to the cou

creasingly threatening movement of revolutionary advance!

There was nothing, in fact, my husband declared, he was not willing to do, to obtain pardon for his inadvertent offence, and a gleam of encouraging favour for the future!

Farther to demonstrate his entire disinterestedness, he proposed to settle upon me, as a jointure, the considerable fortune his father was not only willing, but anxious, to endow him with at once. Moreover, he would, with pleasure, relinquish his own name—which he acknowledged was, for various reasons, one not likely to be pleasing to his lordship—and to assume the family name and arms of his beloved wife!—Much more, of a really very much too humble and cajoling quality was added; and in still worse taste in my opinion, of a sort that seemed to insinuate a feeling of contempt and hostility towards his own father and plebeian relatives in general!

I ventured on some slight remonstrances to this effect—but they were immediately and not exactly for the first time—repelled by Scarlatt, with a degree of petulance and disdain. I had already had occasion to remark how strongly wedded he was

to his own opinions, on almost every subjec
which he professed to have formed them. Bu
my reverence for the superiority of intellect
experience I ascribed to him, hardly recon
me to this epistle. I thought it probable my fa
would despise a submission so abject, and w
in no wise be conciliated towards the offere
the adulation addressed to his own abilities
influence! But Scarlatt persisted so steadf
in the opinion that he had written the very
fection of a reconciling overture, that I ende
believing so myself. Besides, it had
already sometime evident to me that my
band had no respect for female wisdom
general, and considered my opinions, in part
lar, deprived of weight by "my total ine
rience of mankind and the world!"

This humble petition, rather than epistle,
accordingly despatched—and the only repl
elicited was in the text-hand of a lawyer, si
by the three names of an eminent solici
firm.

This document informed "the person s
ing himself Scarlatt Suett," with business
directness, that his communication had
received by the Right Honourable the

Mauleverer, who had thereupon desired Messrs. Sharples, Staples, and Stopples, to inform the "person signing himself Scarlatt Suett,"—Firstly, that his Lordship was not acquainted with any one of the names, and declined all intercourse, by letter or otherwise, with an individual who was, and should continue, to the last hour of his Lordship's life, so far as was in his power, a perfect stranger to him. Secondly, that if "the person signing himself Scarlatt Suett" was one of that name who had rendered himself criminally liable to the laws of his country, had he not fled from their jurisdiction, Lord Mauleverer recommended, as the only reparation in his power, that he should lose no time in returning to some portion of the territory of Great Britain, and submit himself forthwith to their legitimate action, Messrs. Sharples, Staples, and Stopples having received his Lordship's commands to institute judicial proceedings for the abduction of the Honourable Hugh-Helena Pomeroy, whom "the person signing himself Scarlatt Suett" falsely styled his wife, the instant he set foot on any portion of the British soil.

Thirdly, with regard to the extraordinary proposals "the person signing himself Scarlatt

possibly sustained by his own unavoidabl
sence from a post of defence to those prin
of order and legitimacy he had always prof
his Lordship trusted that what remain
precious and valuable in the British consti
might be preserved without the aid of rene
and deserters from the cause of democrac
revolution! His Lordship also hoped that
future occasion, he should be enabled to pu
"the person signing himself Scarlatt S
from having it in his power to make a
of the position conferred by any constitu
however misled, and the exposition of h
tentions, under his own hand and seal,
probably be sufficient to save that of his
ship's native county from the disgrace of
longer huckstered and bargained for by the

circumstances would permit; and he could not but think that years of the disgrace and humiliation of a Suett's representation of his own interest in their name in parliament, would prepare the constituency in question to welcome a gentleman of the ancient blood and familiar designation of Ap Howel in preference, to represent themselves!

As to "the person signing himself Scarlatt Suett" proffering to settle his fortune on the misguided young lady whom he falsely and illegally styled his wife, Lord Mauleverer had no opinion to give on the subject. It was of course entirely at the pleasure of any man to deal with his property as he thought fit! *It was otherwise with women* — for which reason his Lordship had constituted his daughter a ward of chancery, and had taken all the precautions in his power to protect her from the rapacity of the conspirators who had ensnared her! But his Lordship was of opinion that "the person signing himself Scarlatt Suett" had better, in the first instance, ascertain whether he had any property to dispose of? His Lordship had received the opinion of three of the most eminent counsel in the country, that there was a flaw in the usurped

title of the Suetts to the great source of th
riches, which he trusted would, in a short peri
be submitted for adjudication; when it mig
possibly be held that the consent of the heir
an entail in perpetuity, under the circumstan
of the Ap Howel property, was necessary to g
validity to the nefarious cozenage which h
placed a company of London tradesmen in t
possession of the estates of an ancient We
family!

The effect of this reply on my husband may
imagined. It was no doubt sufficient to exas
rate the temper of any man. But I think
had no cause to turn the revengeful bitterness
his feelings upon me! Yet Scarlatt address
his denunciation of the pride and insolence
the English oligarchy so plainly to me, that
could not be mistaken in feeling myself grievous
hurt and insulted.

It was the first time he had spoken to me, h
bride of two months, with aught but the langua
of an almost idolatrous tenderness! It affect
me accordingly. I left his presence in a fit
the most violent grief and indignation, a
secluded myself in my own chamber, which
refused to open at his entreaties for a long tim

But Scarlatt had speedily changed his note. I was still, and for a long time after, essential to his ambition, if not to his love! He addressed to me such fond implorings for pardon—such assurances of his unabated affection—such apologies for the irritation he had laboured under and exhibited—that at last I yielded, and our tearful reconciliation re-established us in even more tender relations with each other than previously.

Scarlatt, I found, quickly persuaded himself that the letter he had received was chiefly the work of the lawyers who penned it, anxious for their own advantages in blowing the embers between two wealthy families. For my part, I plainly discerned my father's own ideas, and even turns of ironical expression, jutting out in all directions through the stiff legal phraseology employed. But unwilling to hazard another disagreement—the first had been very dreadful to me!—had cost me an infinitude of tears and regrets!—I made no attempt to dissuade Scarlatt from renewing his amicable overtures to Lord Mauleverer, complaining respectfully of the unkind tone in which his remonstrances had been received, and begging a reconsideration of his

proffers. And he was now enabled to add—in the name of a yet unborn pledge of the happiness of his union with his beloved wife and Lord Mauleverer's daughter!—The reply to this was also from Messrs. Sharples, Staples, and Stopples, enclosing my husband's, unopened, and informing him that they were instructed, the Right Honourable the Lord Mauleverer declined all further communication with the "person signing himself Scarlatt Suett, saving in the presence of the justice of his country!"

Meanwhile I had made a failure, though not quite so complete, on my own part! I wrote to my mother a true unvarnished account, so far as I understood the circumstances myself, and as they did not clash with Scarlatt's previous narrative, of the circumstances of my attachment and union with him, I declared I left Mauleverer with the sole view and purpose of escaping from the intolerable tyranny of Madame Le Crampon; that my husband, Sophia Sutcliffe, and the whole Suett family, were entirely guiltless of any design to entrap me. I avowed the warm attachment we had mutually conceived, and my firm assurance of Scarlatt's ignorance of my real name and position, until he had irrevo-

cably engaged himself to me, with the utmost purity of disinterested attachment! These were the sole causes of the rash step we had taken:—pardon for which I implored of my mother with all the earnestness and fervour my really sincere love for herself, and desire to retrieve my position could inspire.

I would not, in my turn, suffer any of Scarlatt's improvements in my epistle! They were matters of form and phraseology certainly—but I thought they marred the genuine tone of the composition. We had a little discussion again—and Scarlatt perhaps began to understand that I had some will and determination of my own, or considered his hour of supremacy had not arrived—for he soon desisted from his corrections.

I received a reply to this letter, hurried and short, evidently written by stealth, and with an agitated hand! In fact, the writer confessed so much—and that she replied at all against the absolute prohibition of her lord! She blamed me—but gently, and with motherly forbearance; and there was a touch of indescribably pathetic allusion to her own harsh fate in the words—"But if vou love the man you have chosen, so

deeply and unalterably as you avow, I cannot condemn you to have chosen rather to be happy with him in exile and adversity, than miserable with all that the world affords with one whom you might find too late you could not love!" But at the same time the poor lady declared she could never again receive any communication from me until her lord and my father's heart was more softened towards a reconciliation than it was possible yet to hope! For which happy object any influence she possessed, or might venture to use, should not be wanting! At least she could always afford her prayers—for God would pardon a woman's disobedience to her husband, so far as to permit her to supplicate Him to restore her family to peace, and an only child to the arms of a desolate and broken-hearted mother, who could scarcely hope to survive to witness this blessed result, if it was long deferred!

The iron had entered my poor mother's soul! She was the very slave now, the relentless despotism of my father's character and system had been directed so many years to produce!

Our hopes were now turned altogether towards an event which it seemed probable, towards the

end of the first year of our marriage, would cement indissolubly the union between my husband and myself. His own impatient eagerness was the chief cause of the failure of his expectations. He removed me by too rapid journeys to the coast of France, before my confinement, anxious to lose no time afterwards in returning to England. He imagined my father's hostility would inevitably yield after such an event, and that he could not persevere in his projects of bringing disgrace and chastisement on the progenitor of a race that must interest his own blood. My firstborn perished in its earliest hour of existence—and it was two years later before the birth of a second, and my slow recovery from a descent to the very gates of death to bring his young, ill-starred life to the day, gave us the encouragement we needed to venture home.

My poor, poor child!—we called our son, and had it conspicuously proclaimed, by all the means we could contrive to bring it to his grandfather's notice, after Lord Mauleverer's own names—Herbert Loftus Pomeroy! And glad would my husband have been if we could have omitted the Suett from our own designation. But that could

not be; and I confess I myself could very well understand Scarlatt's fretful impatience and disdain of his patronymic! We neither of us had the philosophy to consider, at this time, that the man makes the name—not the name the man.

Much had happened to affect our fortunes during this long interval. I corresponded very constantly with Mrs. Luxmoor, as I may now more properly style Sophia Sutcliffe, who kept me informed upon all events in England, of private interest, that came to her knowledge. And Scarlatt and his mother kept up quite as faithful an exchange of intelligence, though the former did not so habitually permit my perusal of his correspondence as I did his of mine.

The Luxmoors' circumstances had undergone an immense improvement. The aged incumbent of the Ap Howel living had died off, and agreeably, no doubt, to previous promise, the elder Suett exercised his powers as guardian of young Sir Vivian, to confer it upon the Reverend Carolus. And this in spite of very vehement remonstrances on the part of the minor patron himself, who carried his opposition so far as to declare that he would divulge certain particulars

of the man's conduct, publicly, if the design were persisted in, which would prevent any bishop from ever inducting him. Sophia made a trial of my friendship for her, by writing to beg me to use my influence with Sir Vivian, which she seemed to think still very powerful, "to remove his unhappy prejudices" against her husband. And though I was myself strongly disinclined to essay it, from motives the reader will divine, and which my enlarging experience suggested, Scarlatt joined so earnestly in the request that I would do what I could to serve his tutor, and write in his behalf to the "savage young cur" to get him off the poor man's heels, that I should not have known how to refuse, had I even not been inclined to serve my friend at a more severe personal sacrifice.

I wrote, accordingly, to Sir Vivian; and, though his reply did not exceed, by a word, the briefest form of a polite assent, I could not but perceive the tone of regret and reluctance pervading it. Yet, remembering the nervous tremours to which his early youth was subject, I did not think it strange that even these few lines had a wavering and hesitation scarcely to

be imputed merely to his dislike of my candidate, visible in every stroke.

And thus the Reverend Carolus Luxmoor was inducted, without further opposition, into the valuable living of Llan-howel cum Pomeroy, in which benefice his conduct did so little credit to the recommendation of his friends, and so much to the besotted perversity and wickedness of his own character.

The elder Suett, indeed, made it a pretence for his gift that he had effected a private stipulation with Luxmoor to resign the living whenever he was called upon—whenever, as was likely enough to happen, the obstinate young patron should see through his folly, and be inclined to resume the excellent provision he now so foolishly threw away.

But, from all we heard, it was more than ever unlikely Sir Vivian should ever claim the observance of this unlawful contract. He was still bent on the profession of a soldier. He had submitted to a severe operation to remove a disqualification in his lame foot, which had perfectly succeeded. And the only studies to which he would submit were such as conduced

to the object he had in view. Towards the end of our three years of exile, we heard that he had been pronounced duly qualified for the service, according to the slight scrutiny then required, and that his name was down for the first opening in a regiment of his choice, chiefly raised in the principality, and taking thence its name.

Sophia, who furnished us with these details, seemed to have forgotten all her old dislike of Sir Vivian. She testified often now, on the contrary, to the young man's possession of brilliant and commanding talents, which she thought it a pity should be wasted in the lounging life of an English officer, at that period of general and profound peace. After she had obtained the living for her husband, there seemed reason for the constancy and warmth of these panegyrics. But she dwelt upon the high and generous traits of young Ap Howel's character so perseveringly, that Scarlatt declared himself weary of the subject, and uttered an impatient pshaw whenever it turned up in my friend's letters.

In general the tone of Mrs. Luxmoor's communications appeared to give him satisfaction.

Their style was, indeed, remarkably good—flowing, natural, abounding in keen observation, and frequently brilliant and epigrammatic in expression. He always professed himself greatly attached to his jovial ex-tutor, and Sophia's constantly affectionate and admiring allusions to him, he declared gave him much pleasure. It was the best proof of their perfect reconciliation, and of Luxmoor's good and steady demeanour! In fact Sophia's jealousy and conceit had always singularly exaggerated what was blameable in his conduct! Scarlatt thought it was probably enough more her own caprice and inconstancy than Luxmoor's illtreatment, that had induced her to elope from him at Cambridge! He was glad, very glad, that her eyes were now opened to her husband's superiority! — Indeed she seemed now as much to err in a contrary extreme! But it was the way with women! They knew no medium.

I myself noticed that Sophia's eulogiums chiefly ran on the intellectual qualities of Luxmoor; the excellence of his sermons, the reception his conversational powers had secured him among the principal society in their neighbourhood. She alluded sometimes to his popularity

in his parish. Very little was said of any improvement in his morals or conduct! But as Sophia alluded to no causes of unhappiness as continuing to exist between them, I hoped the best, and refrained from inquiries that might revive, needlessly, painful recollections.

By Scarlatt our three years of exile were passed with infinite begrudging. He regretted them as so much time lost to his ambitious hopes and purposes of self-elevation. And at last I shared in his impatience not inconsiderably. My ideas were too little expanded to comprehend the littleness of an ambition whose sovereign aim was not the good and advancement of mankind, or of one's own country, but a peerage for one's self! This was Scarlatt's—who regarded his alliance with me as a stepping-stone to that great object, but not as a realization! He wanted to be a lord himself—and was not at all contented with the prospect of being some day the husband of a peeress in her own right! But at a distance from all the centres of political action and influence, what could he do to forward his plans?—He certainly studied books of statistics and of political economy very hard!

Meanwhile I was enabled to gratify one of the

most eager longings of my youth, my father's resolute denial of which had been a motive in my revolt against his authority. I visited the most famous scenes and capitals in Europe in the society of my young bridegroom-husband. We made the tour of France, Switzerland, Italy, and visited most of the principal cities of Germany, distributing our three years pretty fairly among them. We made the longest stay at Genoa, where my poor darling, Herbert Loftus, was born. And from Genoa we took ship directly home, when we had finally made up our resolution to venture all, and return thither.

Even had we not possessed this little hostage of safety, the motives for our return had grown so powerful as to overcome any hesitation the inveterate exasperation of my father might have occasioned. The Corn-Law agitation had at last reached its culminating point, and a dissolution of parliament, to test the popular determination, was immediately expected. Scarlatt was now firmly persuaded that his hour of political emergence was at hand! He had, indeed, a notion that he was destined to make a great figure in the approaching struggle. The adulation to which he had been exposed from child-

hood, had puffed him up with very extraordinary notions of his own powers! He conceived that it was given to him to stand in the gap between the English people and the aristocracy; to stay the raging onslaught of the popular resolve, and rebuke the maddening waves back into their depths! And he had the Quixotic fancy that his achievements in defence of my father's order would be such as to compel his gratitude and acknowledgment of his merits! Confidence and favour would follow.

I also had begun to grow very weary of foreign sounds, and scenes, and visages. The recollections of my early youth often returned upon me in new and more attractive forms. Since I was myself a mother, I comprehended the anguish and wrong I had inflicted on my own parents in depriving them of their child! Above all, the image of my gentle, suffering, uncomplaining mother often recurred to me, with quickening starts of remorse at the conviction of how much my desertion must have added to her life-long silent woe! Amidst the most gorgeous and diversified landscapes of the famous countries we traversed, my heart often returned with strange yearnings to my obscure

native valleys. I wanted to see Mauleverer again at last! After all, it was my home—the home of my childhood!—Very homesick indeed we both were at last; and when our child was born, our doting love and admiration for the splendid little stranger made us conclude at once it was impossible my father's anger could survive the pleading of so dear and irresistible a claim on forgiveness!

The news of my grandmother's death, which reached us about the time I was recovering from my confinement, seemed so visibly to better our chances, that we determined no longer to hesitate. The repeated and, truth to say, violent and abusive assurances of the elder Suett, that Lord Mauleverer's exasperation continued unabated, and that he would resort to every means of revenge, no longer deterred Scarlatt. In reality, he had a conviction that his father purposely exaggerated in these statements, in order to prolong his son's absence from England until the danger of being called upon to fulfil his own promises, in the resignation of his seat in parliament, should pass over.

We landed at Milford Haven, and thence proceeded at once into Glamorganshire.

CHAPTER III.

HOME.

It was not very wisely done, but Mrs. Suett, who happened to be in supreme authority at Plas Newydd at the time, determined to announce our return as a public event, by a grand *fête*. Her husband was in close and, for him, very unusual attendance on the moribund parliament in London.

The whole county rang, for weeks after, with the details of the "splendid old English hospitality" at Plas Newydd, given to celebrate the return of its "eldest son and his highborn bride to the paternal roof!" There was a general holiday at the mines—oxen roasted whole, puncheons of ale and stronger liquors set abroach; music,

shouting, feasting, firing; and my husband made a speech, returning thanks for our reception, in the midst of an applause from the already half-drunken multitude, that scarcely allowed a dozen of his words to be audible, but "gave the world assurance" of a popular speaker in three or four columns of the weekly county newspapers, devoted to what was then supposed to be his party in politics. But, unhappily, these same journals took the opportunity to introduce some hearty abuse of my father's implacable pride and resentment, that gave him a hint, he was never slow to take, of what the *world*—an abstraction before which his whole existence lay prostrate—expected him to do!

I could not, at first, discover much of visible change at Plas Newydd. Everything was still bright and gorgeous in the decorations. Mrs. Suett was still the same cheerful, good-looking, universally active mistress of a family she had been. She received me with really superfluous marks of affection and homage; loaded me with caresses and honors! As for my child, she literally adored it! Her own she could never have treated with so much respect mingled with the fondness she lavished on my little Herbert!

He was to her a prince as well as a grandson! She won my heart inexpressibly by her devotion to my child! Her h's mute or aspirated in the wrong places, were thenceforth nothing to me. I looked upon her as half the mother of my darling, and loved her in him!

My first impression of anything disagreeable, on my return, was derived from the fact that, to my very great surprise and discomfort, I found Madame Le Crampon installed at Plas Newydd as *gouvernante* of Bronwen Suett! This circumstance had never once been mentioned in all the letters I had seen thence; nor had Sophia alluded to it! The latter was, however, less singular, as, according to her account, she very rarely made even a ceremonious call on her former mistress. Mrs. Suett, it appeared, could not forget that they had once stood to one another in the relation of employer and employed, and had treated her with such coldness and distance, on these few occasions, as to discourage any advances towards intimacy.

I must confess I found Madame Le Crampon in a very forgiving humor, and willing to overlook any cause of displeasure I might have given her! I believe she would gladly have kissed me

once more! But I suffered no approach to cordiality between us; and I almost thought my child's rosy cheek had lost in sweetness and freshness after she had pressed it. Madame had made a good exchange. Bronwen was an infinitely more docile pupil than ever I could have been, and the Parisienne had established a species of supremacy at Plas Newydd, that suited her much better than her strictly assigned position at Mauleverer Castle. In her quality of *ci-devant* Marchioness—*marquise*, at all events—for so she now announced herself, I found, despoiled by half-a-dozen revolutions!—of a personage thoroughly conversant with the most refined and Parisian manners; a familiar friend of the fallen Royal Family of France, and endowed with the inestimable advantage of being unable to speak intelligible English—Madame Le Crampon had not found it difficult to establish herself in a position of influence at Plas Newydd. But chance alone, Mrs. Suett rather blushingly assured me, brought about the arrangement. She had forgotten the name of my disliked governess, and until I recognised her thought she had "picked up a perfect stranger," with the assistance of a London scholastic agent

Bronwen I found the natural product of the Frenchwoman's absurdly forcing and artificial system of education. She was now in her fourteenth year; but she had all the manners and formality of a dowager countess of fifty! Nothing of the vivacity and impulse of youth! She never spoke but when she was spoken to: she answered you with every propriety of address, but entirely without animation or naturalness—almost without vitality. You looked at her with a misgiving that she might be some skilfully contrived specimen of automaton work! She uttered no idea that was her own: indeed she had no ideas but such as her governess dictated, and her classbooks had put into her head, with as much rational meaning and effect as a lot of rootless flowers in a garden bed, of germinative or reproductive power! Madame Le Crampon was the absolute ruler of this machine;—her mother had ceased to hold almost any relation to it! She had abdicated in favour of that hard and implacable usurpress.

Bronwen still continued very pretty; her features had still their waxen purity and delicacy of finish: she had the complexion of a new-blown rose! Her timidity was excessive. She trem-

bled and blushed if you addressed the commonest observation to her.

Poor girl! what a mechanical toy had Madame Le Crampon's system manufactured her into! Not only all her actions, but all her thoughts, the simplest movements of her young heart, had been regulated like those of a chronometer. It saddened me to see a human creature, in whose veins the warm blood of childhood was flowing, subjected to such minute cruelty of regulation and repression! As if one free thought, one unbidden throb of the natural heart, were an offence against the God of nature!

In her joy to see me, the poor child, however evinced she had not altogether forgotten she was fashioned of human stuff. As for her young brothers, the twins, whom Sophia was wont to call the Suett Dumplings, I found they were much grown, but as worthy as ever of the designation. They also were under suitable tutelage. Dr. Stillcoke, Scarlatt's former tutor, who had been ousted in favour of Luxmoor, was reinstated in office with them. Mrs. Suett had arrived at the conviction that she had not greatly bettered things in choosing so much more fashionable and lively an instructor. The conviction being thrust

upon her in the shape of Scarlatt's enormous college bills, which during our absence had accumulated against him at Plas Newydd. To such an extent, in fact, that his father, irritated at the discovery, and aware that his son was out of his creditors' reach, had flatly refused to pay a single stiver on any of them.

This was one of the subjects of uneasiness we had to consider immediately on our return. But there were others. A perfectly new view of the interior politics of Plas Newydd was presented to me on the very evening after the close of the day's riotous revel of welcome! I had become *one of the family!* It seemed to be thought no longer necessary to conceal the true state of the domestic relations from me.

In the first place, besides the elder Suett's exasperation at the heavy debts his son had left unpaid in England on our flight, another element of discord seemed likely to rise into flames between them! John Thomas, it appeared, if ever he had been sincere in promising to relinquish public life in favour of his son, had now entirely changed his mind. He had come to the conclusion that the failure in his own and family's expectations of procuring a baronetcy, arose from

his having "played his game in parliament the wrong way!" It was not by evincing subserviency and adherence to a ministry on all occasions, that you induced it to comply with your expectations in return. It was by frightening, by "bullying the people in power," in John Thomas's own phrase—that you could make certain of your object. Once get them afraid of you, and they give you what you want. He had been driving on the wrong tack always hitherto; but he would now "start on the independent dodge!" He would let them see! And, accordingly, he had gone to London, to oppose his old whig friends, tooth and nail, on a question comfortably apart from the popular one of the day, but on which their existence as a ministry was supposed to be at stake. According to Mrs. Suett, he expected the reward of this conduct in the new parliament likely to be speedily summoned, and meanwhile "laid himself out extensively" to conciliate his considerably alienated constituency, and she was certain had not the slightest idea of giving up his chances of re-election in favour of any one.

Scarlatt's irritation at this announcement was excessive. He railed openly against his father

as "an old humbug;" and so possessed was he with his own favourite notions, that he declared he would set up against him, if he could bring about a reconciliation with "the Castle." So he always spoke of my family—and he seemed to have little doubt that this happy result was at hand. He would then present himself to the county, on the conservative interest; and backed by his father-in-law's, he had not the least doubt he should distance all competition. *His* interests, he rather pompously declared, were now far more with the landed than with the commercial and manufacturing portion of the nation. He was for preserving the Corn Laws in all their integrity, and would take an early opportunity of satisfying Lord Mauleverer, and the country gentlemen in general, of his opinions on the subject. He was certain now, he said, that his father's accounts of the continued exasperation of feeling at "the Castle," were purposely exaggerated to keep him abroad, out of the way. And that was why he supplied us with money so liberally for our travels, while he allowed him to fall into disrepute at home, by refusing all payment of his just debts. But the "old boy" would find the ruse a failure now, and a much worse one soon.

There seemed some reason, certainly, in another piece of bad news his mother communicated, for Scarlatt to desire his fortunes not to be identified with the prosperity of the commercial world. Within a few days before our return, Mr. Suett had received a letter from Sir Vivian Ap Howel to state that, before he joined his regiment, which was shortly to embark for India, he requested to have an interview with him, in the presence of witnesses, on matters relating to the Mynydd Howel estate. Lord Mauleverer, with whom he continued on terms of the most suspicious intimacy, was to be one of these witnesses. And from all Mrs. Suett and her husband could gather, it was the intention of the young baronet to enter a formal protest against the legality of the act which had transferred the property in the wealthy Howel mines from his family to the Suetts, and the company they represented.

Something hostile was certainly intended, for Sir Vivian declined to stay at Plas Newydd in this ominous visit, and had ordered an apartment to be prepared for him in his own old ruin of a castle, where he had already located "a miserable old fellow who played the harp, and had gone blind, with his two old grisly hags of daughters!"

I confess it was not without some painful emotion, that I heard Mrs. Suett add ingenuously, "And in case of a lawsuit, God only knows how it will go with us! Our own lawyers look blue over it; for they say Sir Vivian's father ought to have signed the deed too, which he always stood out in India he would not, and went through any poverty, rather than consent. There's a screw loose in our case, you may depend upon it, Scarlatt, by your father's anxiety! We shall have a world of trouble, anyhow, and I am sure your father's temper needs no more souring! His very look already is enough to curdle all the dairies round about for miles! And that's why I am so pleased now, with always having behaved so kind to the poor young fellow, when he was left an orphan, and bringing him up as much as I could with Bronwen! For, if he would only fall in love with her now she is woman-grown almost, and take her fortune as a set-off for what he thinks we may owe him, all would be right again!"

My husband replied with a deep execration—an unusual thing with him! What he said, indeed, implied a really startling vehemence of hostile feeling against Ap Howel, and the more

so, as I had rarely heard him allude to him in any manner since the scene of the pistols at the Kerig y Drudion.

"'The poor young fellow' *be blasted!* If I have a word to say in the matter, he sha'nt have Bronwen, nor a single penny of ours, with or without her! Why, mother, what can he do without money in a suit against us, in chancery? And if he had plenty, possession is nine-tenths of the law; and I would engage to hold the Mynydd Howel, in chancery, to all eternity, if he had ten thousand times a better right than the best!"

I was shocked at the open and extreme injustice of this language.

"Well, it does seem strange! After the mountain had fallen in on the mines for more than fifty years!" sighed Mrs. Suett. "Still, own I am all for conciliation! I liked the poor lad always well enough himself—and then the people about here consider him the rightful owner, and will, to the end of time!"

"He may not last so long himself, mother. Let us hope he may get his brains—if he has any—knocked out with a cannon-ball, or a Burmese mace, before we are troubled with him

much more!" replied my husband; adding vindictively, "I am very glad he has the prudence not to take up his quarters at Plas Newydd, while I am here! I owe him the chastisement of a good deal of bygone impertinence, and I doubt if I should be able to restrain my temper after this indication of his malice; and in that case, I should use very little ceremony in clearing the house of him, and all his ancestral honors, at the point of my boot!"

How was it that the scene of the Kerig y Drudion returned with such force and distinctness upon my mind, as I listened to this outbreak?

* * * *

One of my most pleasing anticipations—perhaps the most pleasing—on my return to England—was that of being reunited to my friend Sophia. Llanhowel Rectory, which she now inhabited with her husband, was distant certainly about five miles from Plas Newydd. But I looked upon such a space as constituting hardly any obstacle to a renewal of all our intimacy.

The very morning after our arrival at Plas Newydd, I determined to drive over to Llanhowel Rectory, and surprise my beloved friend with the

news of my return in person. I longed to present my little darling to her. I had all along felt that my happiness in the possession of this exquisite little treasure of beauty and innocence would never be complete, until Sophia shared it with me.

Every shade of umbrage, with regard to the former relations between my husband and Sophia, had long since entirely vanished from my mind; and I supposed, indeed, that Scarlatt would derive as much harmless satisfaction from the renewal of our intimacy as myself. I was, therefore, considerably vexed and surprised, when, on requesting him, before he went down, to bear me company, after breakfast, to Llanhowel, he inquired —and I think, without any affectation of ignorance —what on earth I wanted to do at Llanhowel? I laughed—and perhaps I coloured a little as I reminded him that our friends, the Luxmoors, resided there. "Ah, so they do," he replied, as if he had forgotten all about them, and they were suddenly recalled to his recollection. "And I should like to see *Luxmoor!*—he might be of some help to me! You may invite him to come over and talk with me, but I sha'n't be able to go out this morning—nor for a week or a fortnight

to come—on mere visits! I shall be very busy looking after my prospects for parliament, and seeing what can be done about a reconciliation with the Castle!—Yes, you can invite Luxmoor up, but—what was I saying about visits?—I don't want you to get on visiting terms with his wife! *She don't exactly mix in our circle, you know!*—at least the one we intend to move in!——and having been only a governess here, she is scarcely the kind of person I should like you to associate with!"

I really was surprised—but I was not gratified: I was even hurt by this tone of neglect and disdain towards my own dearest and most cherished friend. "I do not see," I said, pettishly, "that I am likely to have so very numerous and agreeable a society at Plas Newydd, that I should wilfully deprive myself of that of the only clever and amusing person I know about here, merely because she has once been a governess!"

This was rather too hard a hit. The Suetts had but a scanty roll of visitors, for those whom they wished to visit would not visit them, and they gave no encouragement to others of inferior station, who would have been glad enough, no doubt, to pay court to such rich people.

Scarlatt replied with sharpness, "You can do as you like, of course, my love! Your receiving Mrs. Luxmoor will merely look like a renewal of kind patronage. It would be different, of course, if *I* associated with her, on seeming terms of equality! I must, therefore, decline *in toto!*"

Nor do I deem this scornful indifference in the least put on! Scarlatt, absorbed in his projects of ambition, and resolution to make his way into the highest spheres of society, was probably quite in earnest in it!

But his mother appeared to be still more disinclined to my intention, which I announced at breakfast, asking her for a carriage to convey myself, baby, and nurse, over to Llanhowel. "Nay, come, my dear!" (she loved to display a good deal of familiarity with me now) "the woman there's no company for you! What do you want looking *her* up again? I am sure she has been amply repaid for any services she ever rendered you and your 'usband! She and her 'usband, too! Take my advice, and let her drop! We've all had enough of her!"

"Why, Mrs. Suett, what can you mean? Do you wish to insinuate that I ought to be so ridi-

culous and absurd as to be *jealous* of Mrs. Luxmoor, on account of that foolish nonsense years ago? And even then it was altogether a misapprehension!"

Scarlatt was present, and he coloured up angrily. "Yes! she had the infernal impudence to make me her screen, as she thought, with Luxmoor!" he said, in a tone of excessive pique. "Well, I hope she enjoys her position at present with him!—How is Luxmoor going on, mother? Do you ever hear?"

"Like Old Nick himself!—And yet they say he does a wonderful deal of good, too! I can hardly tell, sometimes, what to make of all I hear. But if ever there were two sides to a story, there is to the Luxmoors'!" said Mrs. Suett, with a very puzzled expression. "Why, some people tell me that he actually *beats* his wife every now and then! And she herself declares no husband could possibly behave better to a woman! She knows best, of course. But then she says he hardly ever gets the worse for liquor now—whereas, I hear, often and often, that he is even at times all but drunk when he goes into the pulpit. There are lots of lies told about the Luxmoors on one side or other, that's certain

But as to my thinking for one moment, yo could be jealous of an ugly, stuck-up-nose creature like Sophia!—though I used sometim to think she is not so ugly as she gives herse out!—such a thought never once entered int my head!"

"I assure you I am not jealous of her, Mr Suett," I replied, with great tranquillity, "an to prove it, I intend to enjoy as much of h society as I possibly can, while we remain at Pl Newydd, if you do not forbid me to make m friends welcome under your roof!".

"If you could only hear what Madame I Crampon says of her!—I mean, I really hav no objections to make, in that case," Mrs. Sue replied, cutting herself short, but evidently n much pleased. "*I* only say there is too muc of the cat and the cream about her ways of goin on, to make me very anxious to see her again : my pantry! Why, even my own husban John Thomas—I do believe she was quite mal ing up to him at one time, only he was made too tough material!"

I could not help breaking into a laugh at th observation, and after some slight reflection, Mr Suett joined me heartily in the demonstratio

But Scarlatt said peevishly, "I can quite believe it of her! Mrs. Luxmoor is a perfect coquette, and not at all a good associate for you, Helena," and he left the room.

I persisted nevertheless, seeing no good reason why I should abandon my friend, in any assigned; and it was arranged I was to be driven over to Llanhowel with a pair of ponies Mrs. Suett kept for her own use. I refused the great state family coach, with the four "spanking greys," as Mrs. Suett called them, resolutely.

I reached Llanhowel about noon on a wintry-looking spring day, leaving the hills behind me fantastically decked with wreaths of snow. Llanhowel is a village, or rather a group of farmhouses, connected by some scattered cottages and hovels, skirting a deep hollow glen, about half way between Mauleverer and the Mynydd Howel. I remembered to have avoided it by a considerable circuit on my flight from Madame Le Crampon; and it struck me as very strange that, as I stepped out of Plas Newydd, to return so far on my way, I had politely returned this woman's profound, *ancien régime* curtsey! How marvellously intertwisted are the threads of life! Why need we wonder they are so

seldom woven into a web of consistent hues and pattern!

Nearly all the way to Llanhowel I commanded from my seat in the open chaise, a view of the distant towers of Mauleverer! My mother and my father I knew were there; and often during my journey I felt an inclination to extend it to their abode, and throw myself at their feet for pardon! It would, perhaps, have spared much future suffering and present uneasiness of suspense! But Scarlatt had otherwise determined. He assured me I ran risk of being forcibly detained by my father, and that his main hope of reconciliation lay in observing for a time a policy of "masterly inactivity" (the phrase of the day) and awaiting the good effects of his own appearance as a conservative politician and candidate for our county representation. I was not then aware of it; but my husband had determined to act as if in full reliance on his father's former promises, and to make his pretensions known before John Thomas could arrive to say the nay! Once compromised in this manner, he thought that for very shame's sake his father must withdraw from opposition to his scheme

CHAPTER IV.

AN INDISSOLUBLE UNION!

I saw Sophia some time before she could probably have seen me. The village lies at the bottom of the hollow, and was spread like a map at the foot of the steep road that descends to it. There were only two good houses in it: one a large, old, scrambling structure, which my jockey informed me belonged to a Squire Gawker, who was master of the Howel Hunt, and otherwise a most eminent sportsman. The other was the parsonage. This was close on the church—a very ancient little Gothic building, overgrown with ivy to the very top of a disproportionately lofty steeple. The parsonage itself was almost as ancient probably, all on the ground plan and

roofed with rushes. Neatly enough, however and of a size to accommodate a considerable family—always expected in a Welsh cure, of course. The windows were latticed in small diamond panes, set in arched frameworks very deeply in the walls, and in parts prettily overhung with ivy, briar-rose, and a variety of creepers, among which was one whose scarlet leaves had survived the winter, and gave a cheerful, fire-like glow to nearly the whole front. But what chiefly struck me in the scene was the fact that, although the space before the house was evidently a churchyard, from its numerous jutting memorials, it was trimmed and laid out in quite an elegant garden fashion. And along the well gravelled walk to the house through this, under the shade of the tall yews bordering it, I perceived two figures walking towards the gate. One I did not an instant doubt to be Sophia—the other I could not conclude to be her husband. It was a man about his height, and in clerical black; but much more softly rounded and plump, and besides dressed in knee breeches and buckles — an antiquated clerical style never affected.

My heart beat quick with joyous expectation

But I was unwilling that any stranger should witness its overflow; and considering, from what I observed, that Sophia was about to dismiss her guest, I ordered the carriage to stop at a little taphouse I perceived in the village, at a stone's throw from the parsonage, but concealed from it by a group of elm pollards. Here I determined to await till the strange visitor passed out. His one-horse brougham, of dark bottle-green, was evidently open in readiness for his arrival.

I could plainly discern from where I sat that Sophia was escorting this personage, whoever he was, with great marks of deferential attention. The personage himself, I could also perceive, seemed at once pleased, flattered, and reluctant, repeatedly pausing, as if to decline further homage, but allowing himself to be led on without much real repugnance; for they arrived together at the gate, laughing and chatting in the most agreeable and amicable manner possible. The guest and hostess took there a very cordial farewell, and Sophia stood holding the gate in her hand until her companion had struggled his corpulent little person, with some visible difficulty, but great pretensions to agility, into the vehicle.

"Really, Mrs. Luxmoor," I then distinctly hea him say, in the midst of the village quietne "you must have some extraordinary spell command. I had quite forgotten my rheumatis until I ceased to hear you talk!"

"We only required the accusation of witchcra to complete the absurdity of the charges again us, Mr. Archdeacon!" Sophia replied, in h gayest tones, adding with an arch glance, "B if it be as you are so polite as to say, you c always command the remedy—whenever y please to honour us with your presence! And regret more than ever, Mr. Luxmoor shou have gone on such a long round of sick visit tion as not to be at home to have had t pleasure of showing you over his improvemen himself. His schools especially! He cou have explained the system so much better than have been able!—But I hope at least I have h the good fortune to convince you of the injusti of the base anonymous communications address to my lord the bishop, and that Mr. Luxmoor doing to the contrary, all the good he possib can with his limited means (we have no one help us, you are aware sir, in this out-of-the-w sporting place!) and the obstinacy of the peo

in sticking to their Welsh prejudices and gibberish!"

"You may be satisfied I shall report most favourably to his lordship, Mrs Luxmoor.—And I believe, meanwhile, I can assure you no further notice will be taken on the subjects I have been obliged to mention to you! Everything I have seen and heard in Llanhowel—above all, your testimony!—is in complete refutation of those vile anonymous slanderers!" was the affable reply.

Sophia smiled with her singularly fascinating mixture of melancholy and gaiety, and waving her hand very gracefully as the carriage drove off, she turned with a suddenly changed and impatient step from the gate, and seemed hurriedly making back to the house. I thought I would give her the full pleasure of a surprise; so, desiring them to let me out of the carriage, I crossed and entered the garden-churchyard, at some little distance behind her.

I was rather pleased, with this plan in view, to perceive that Sophia made towards one of the out-houses—an uninhabited sexton's, or perhaps, merely used for the purpose of stowing away tools and lumber. I followed softly on in her

steps, and I saw her enter at a door on the farther side of the little building. I was myself then passing an open wooden shutter set too high to see into the place, but whence an interior sounds were audible. And I was arrested at the spot by hearing Sophia speak in raised and passionate tones, very different from those dulcet ones so lately on her lips. "Come into the house now, vile drunkard! and get to your bed!—What a morning of lies and tediousness you have cost me!"

"You tell the *lie!* I am not drunk! What do you mean by having me shut up here, you—" and the most degrading of epithets, from man to woman, was applied to Sophia, in the hoarse tipsy tones of a voice that I instantly recognise to be Luxmoor's!

"Is it your intention to go on like a mad bull as usual, before the Archdeacon is well out of hearing?" Sophia answered, seemingly too much accustomed to abuse, to be ruffled by the insult. Yet she added, in a low menacing mutter, that came distinctly to me—"Such a brutish spectacle as you present, Luxmoor! is enough to make any woman—give you cause for the atrocious terms you apply to me!

"I *have* cause!" returned the drunken wretch. "Isn't there that great pile of horseflesh, Gawker, constantly haunting in and out of the house? The devil fetch me, and a side of the house away together, if I stand it all much longer!"

"I do not see the necessity for the devil's taking a side of the house! otherwise I have no objection, personally!" was Sophia's irritating response; and she added in a still bitterer and more stinging manner, "So you are at your old game again, are you? But what sort of damages do you think you could make out of Gawker? A fellow who has ruined himself with dogs as you intend to ruin yourself with—I will not use your word—with *ladies!* For your delightful doings at widow Wrangham's opposite, it seems, have mainly contributed to procure us the honour of the archdeacon's visitation—a visitation indeed it was to me!—And had I shown a particle of natural feeling—of belief in the charge—which I know to be so true!—your seven hundred a year would have gone to the winds—and you ought to have rejoiced if the friend you have mentioned had literally come and carried you off! —without the houseside, however, if possible:

that would be a dilapidation in a parsonage which we should have had to make good!"

I heard the words in reply—the brutal, the barbarous words—"I'll give you one for yourself, meantime, madam, you won't find it so easy to repair!" and the sound of a heavy blow, on human flesh—never mistaken!—a suppressed but piercing shriek that went through my heart —But I know not what else happened before I found myself cast between a woman who was bleeding profusely, as it seemed to me, from *the eyes!* and a demon in human form—in the form of Luxmoor!—who held her by the dishevelled hair—and was redoubling blows upon her with his unmanly fist up to the moment when I threw myself between them!

Marvellous, marvellous! I was screaming for help, but Sophia herself—who recognised me at a glance—implored me to be quiet! "It is nothing—it is over—I provoked him too much: he is intoxicated! Do not bring exposure upon us, for God's sake, dear Hugh-Helena! for I see it is you—it must be you or an angel! He is very good when he is sober—and he rarely exceeds now! But—but—I really can hardly see you! Go into the house, Luxmoor,

dear, and tell Fanny to bring me a basin of the well water!—I was to blame—I acknowledge it!—Do pray let me alone now for awhile!"

For Luxmoor—transmuted altogether—from the jovial jocund Luxmoor of our wedding tour—continued to glare at his wife with his bloodshot, angry eyes like some insane beast,—keeping his fists clenched as if to renew the onslaught.

"Mr. Luxmour!—You remember me? Pray don't hurt Sophia before me! Oh, pray don't," interceded I, in terror.

"Oh, you're Mrs. Scarlatt Suett, are you?—Honourable Miss Pom—Pom—Pomerilli Raltum, &c., &c., &c., that was?" returned the inebriated brute. "I married you, did'nt I? according to the rights of the ancient Druids—at Gretna Green was it? No, Sark Toll Bar! All reality; no formality!—Well, what came of it all, in the long run? Are you *one of us* at present?—all the honey sucked?—nothing but the sting left? And pray have you found out what a beauty my pupil really is?"

"Take my handkerchief, dear Sophia, and wipe your poor, poor eyes!"

"I sha'nt want the water soon—though this

is rather too hot, too!" my unhappy friend said, accepting the offer, and bursting into an hysterical paroxysm of tears and laughter, which she vainly attempted to control, as she staunched those bruised and most precious organs which the monster, her husband, seemed purposely to have aimed at.

"You'll wait long enough for water, hot or cold, if you wait till I send you any! I don't care for you nor your d—d chit-chatty old woman of an archdeacon either! I'll go over at once to widow Wrangham's—and you can send for his Venerableship to keep you company, if you like! I won't come home till morning, I can tell you! Nor even then perhaps; but if I see Gawker, Ill tell him it will be all right and snug, at least till then!"

And the abominable wretch, scarcely able to stagger and reel along, with what he had already imbibed, still shaking his fists in savage defiance at his unfortunate wife, made his way from the out-house, no doubt on the errand he had announced.

"O, Sophia; my poor, poor Sophia; how the monster has hurt you!"

"It don't matter, unless it can be seen very much! Have you anything with you, dear—

Eau de Cologne—or anything of that sort? But do look out first and tell me if the archdeacon's carriage is quite out of sight! It would be horrible if he should see Luxmoor in the state he is in—after the fine account I gave him too! He will think me such a liar; and so I am—the worst in creation! But what am I to do? Turn him and myself both out of our only possible honest means of living, now that he has given himself so completely up to the devils that possess him, and which have come into him out of the swine! But *honest*! O my God! when we mock God himself hourly, to keep our seven hundred a-year."

Let me abridge this painful scene. It was hours before Sophia and I recovered sufficiently from the shock of the untoward accompaniments of our rejunction to enjoy it. I am not sure, indeed, that Sophia's deep humiliation and vexation at the exposure of her truly miserable matrimonial position, did not rather render it painful to her to the close.

The poor woman had quite reduced it to a system, her efforts to cover the delinquencies of her husband, and put a good face on her own disasters to the world. But after the scene I had witnessed, it was impossible to hide the

truth from me: and marbled over as she migh
be by the stoicism of endurance she had ende
voured to teach herself, Sophia was taken at
moment of weakness, nigh vanquished by cal
mity, and listening, for the first time for year
to the voice of womanly sympathy and tende
ness. I would not, indeed, be denied; I con
pelled her, by the force of my love and tear
to grant me a confidence so closely locked u
against the whole world besides, that fe
imagined she had any to yield!

She told me all, I think. Luxmoor, alwa
one of the most depraved of men, had foun
his Capræa in this remote Welsh village, whe
he indulged in all the worst vices that had pr
viously disgraced his career, in still more unr
strained and merciless excess. I must not sta
my pages with the record of his enormities: i
one of the frightful legends a mother and h
own daughter figured together as objects of h
bestial licentiousness! Two women, who kep
the tap-house within sight of every windo
in Llanhowel Parsonage! Yet the unfortunat
creature, his wife—induced by what frenzy H
only knows, who, surely for better purposes, ha
implanted in the hearts of women feelings s

deep and ineradicable—had literally devoted herself, and all the powers of her ingenious and indefatigable intellect, to the preservation for him of a position Luxmoor ought long previously to have forfeited, or never to have attained. And so well had she succeeded that everywhere opinion was balanced, and the efforts of the reverend wretch's enemies, raised by his own vileness, had hitherto failed to brand him with the condemnation and exposure he so richly merited. The plan she proceeded on itself would not have occurred to any but a woman of great industry and talent. Nearly all the good that he ought, or might have done in his parish, she did, and ascribed to him!

For example, she had organised a most excellent girls' school; not on the principle of fashioning some score of human parrots to repeat certain scientific sounds, but on one of her own, by which, when she explained it, it appeared to me evident she would manufacture domestic servants, or first-rate wives and mistresses of families for the neighbouring peasantry. A constant rotation of these girls in her own house were the only servants she employed, and they there acquired all the domestic knowledge that could be

of use to them in service, or in the latt
capacities. Yet even this, she whispered me, sl
ventured upon with fear and trembling; an
while she represented Luxmoor everywhere
the benevolent planner and director of th
establishment, she dared not trust him alor
with her young female pupils in its walls!

Yet Sophia could find apologies for this trul
detestable ruffian. It was still the old cry
What could one expect much better from a ma
of talents so remarkable—of so devouring a
activity—condemned to the ennui and unvari
dulness of a country village like Llanhowel?
Luxmoor had been placed in a great town, n
where his conversational powers could have b
properly appreciated, and where he could
met with persons his equals in learning
information, it would have been so diffe
Had he anything of interest to employ his
in at all, at Llanhowel? He was absolut
credulous himself in matters of religion, a
perfectly indifferent to its diffusion!
could hardly induce him to deliver the
she herself scrawled out for him, often en
avoid open censure. Yet in reality he had
all the ambition and love of supremacy

debrand! And his cruelty to her—I do believe the poor woman occasionally persuaded herself—was only a misdirected effluence of his genius for control and absolute sway!

Surely, had he not been one of the most insatiably craving and dissatisfied of wretches, Luxmoor had no reason to consider himself as ill-treated in the distribution of earthly blessings. His income was ample, even with the deductions made for the consequences of his former extravagance and profligacy. Sophia told me that she had placed all his debts, unknown even to himself, in a systematic course of liquidation, and though they were very heavy; and another drawback lay in the fact that they were obliged to allow "the Cambridge Squaw and her *piccaninnies*," as she called them, an annual sum to keep all quiet there; — a few years she hoped would accomplish the result. It was astonishing, indeed, how quickly, after the disasters I have commemorated, Sophia recovered her natural tone of gaiety and *persiflage*. She was not, however, so much hurt as I had imagined. "*A little blood makes a great show!*" she herself told me, laughingly, when, at her desire, I had procured her some water from a well in

the churchyard; and after washing her face only two light brown discolorations remained round her eyes, which we both thought might easily pass for a slight bilious distemperature, until they changed to their next stage of green and purple!

But looking at her now, I could less than ever account for the infidelity and brutish ill-treatment to which Sophia was so evidently subjected. Her figure seemed to me much improved; it was thinner, perhaps, than of yore, but there was more grace and dignity in its motions than I had been wont formerly to discern. The mystical charm of her countenance was enhanced: that exquisite light, of mind and feeling which she still possessed, shone with yet more play of fascinating variety over her features. She was dressed in exceedingly good taste, though in the most modest of morning costumes—in snowy dimity, without a single ornament, and with a plain straw bonnet trimmed with quakerly simplicity. And the more I conversed with her—now that I was better able to appreciate qualities of the mind—the more I was struck by the visible enlargement of hers, and its rare natural endowment! She

explained smilingly, in reply to my compliments, that condemned as she was so much to solitude, by her husband's neglect, she had read more than ever she had read in her life before, and thought she should finally turn out a complete female *bookworm*.

I suggested—No: *an authoress!* I noticed that she slightly coloured when I said so, and looked at me with some eagerness in her expression. "Do you really think I might make my salt by writing?" she said. "I own I am completely tired of *governessing!* But if Luxmoor drives me fairly to despair, it would be delightful not to be obliged to go upon the parish, and *wash paupers' shirts* for an existence!—Writing is hard work, too!—and publishers are the coyest creatures possible to catch, I have heard! Still anything would be better, perhaps, than making a mistake—which I have sometimes been tempted to—and slipping, *accidentally for the purpose*, into that deep, dark well—that goes halfway down to the antipodes—whence you brought me the water!—I shall think of this, my darling pupil!—you teach *me* now!"

It was agreed that I should stay the rest of the day with Sophia—and then, for the first

time, I mentioned about my child and the nurse. She expressed all the eagerness I anticipated to see it, and now, having smoothed her hair and visage, insisted on accompanying me to the gate "to receive little Herbert in the arms of his mother's sister-friend!"

Surprised at my protracted absence, my nurse had meanwhile descended from the carriage, and we met her coming up the avenue with her precious charge.

Sophia's glance flashed eagerly on the infant, which was fast asleep; and a paleness, natural to her when deeply moved, came over her countenance. And deeply moved she was!—What else could be the meaning of that strange spasm which for an instant wrenched her features as she gazed upon my child?

"What a beautiful little creature! He has his mother's features visibly—but his father's complexion! A regular little Christian Cupid without the wings or the poisoned arrows! Let me have it, nurse! I will not disturb it." And she took the sleeping cherub from the good Fleming's arms, and put her lips so softly and tenderly to its tiny rosy mouth that indeed she did not seem at all to ruffle its repose. "Ah!"

she then said, in a low, passionate murmur, rather to herself than to me, "had *he* given me children like this—or even little imps like himself!—I could have been happy with all! But God has denied me even this consolation, for the crime of loving such a wretch!"

It had not occurred to me yet to have made the inquiry—I ought to have known, in fact, that Sophia would have mentioned so noticeable a circumstance in her correspondence. "You have no children then, Sophia?" I inquired vaguely, half lost in the contemplation of my blooming boy. She made me no reply—and the emphatic silence brought me back to recollection.

On the whole, it was a happy day this I spent with Sophia, and it passed with an animation and variety of which I had not a long time had experience, and which renewed with me all the old fascination of her ascendancy.

She was curiously well informed in the gossip of the country-side, and communicated much that was interesting to me, with which the Suetts were not acquainted, or which they had purposely concealed from me.

"My father and mother," Sophia said, "were living on much the same terms as of yore,

though it was reported that "that dreadful
Hecate, my grandmother," had made some
morseful admissions to her son, at her dea
which should have softened his heart towa
her. My mother's health, I was afflicted to lea
was believed to be fast declining, and it was sa
indeed she was now a confirmed invalid, passi
her time almost exclusively in her own apar
ments, "dying of that slow but certain malady
commented Sophia, feelingly, "when alien natur
are irrevocably linked together, and the strong
drags and worries the weaker on with it, till
sinks at last, and perishes, worn out!" Ho
much did I long then for the reconciliation whi
should give me power to devote myself to conso
that bruised and trampled heart!

But it was easy to see Sophia entertained ver
slight hopes that I should ever effect one wi
my father. She told me what until that mo
ment I had never heard—that Lord Maulever
had preferred a bill against the elder Suetts, h
husband and herself, charging them with a co
spiracy in bringing about my marriage wi
Scarlatt; which the grand jury had ignored
once for want of proof.

She spoke of young Ap Howel, introduci

the subject very casually by observing what a favourite he was at Mauleverer Castle, and how useful he might consequently be in promoting the project of a general reconciliation.

"For I am convinced," she said, with her intricate smile, "that you still possess the greatest influence over him! Witness how at a word from you he gave up his opposition to Luxmoor, whom he detests. And you must know that he honours me occasionally with a visit, when he is at Plas Newydd, for no other reason, I am sure, than because he is aware I correspond with you, and can give him tidings of your welfare. Indeed he has never disguised, that was the case! Of course (observing that I coloured) he has outgrown all those silly, boyish fancies of his! and he has often laughed with me himself over his declaration to you, while he was still an Eton second-form—and I never saw anybody so pleased as he was, when I gave him the first news—I had them before Plas Newydd even—of the birth of little Herbert."

"I should not think of asking any more favours of Sir Vivian," I said.

"You would scarcely know him if you saw him again," Sophia resumed. "But I suppose

there are chances of a lawsuit which will mal him less welcome than ever at Plas Newyd so you will not be called upon to produce yo surprise. His system of sacrificing everythir to bodily improvement, has answered wonde fully! He has grown quite a fine young fellow Too thin and nervy still perhaps; but full fire, and restless as quicksilver! I daresay I will look extremely well in his uniform—esp cially when he has covered it with stars, an himself with glory, as I have no doubt he w long before he is an old fogy!—I believe Ale ander the Great was not particularly a giant look at, was he?"

I turned the conversation at once into anoth channel. I did not well know why, but t praises of this youth, whom I myself so high esteemed and honoured, harassed me!

I spoke of my husband. I was, in fact, su denly surprised to remember that Sophia h never made any inquiry about him! Yet the had been time, and a calm enough interval, t notice that he was not with me. We we sitting together at an early tea, to give me tim to return to Plas Newydd before dark, and s yet she had not alluded to Scarlatt at all.

I mentioned, then, how very much engaged he was, and—rather awkwardly, certainly—introduced his message, wishing Luxmoor to come over and see him at the Plas. "But I shall give such an account of his doings," I said, "that Scarlatt will excuse Mr. Luxmoor's taking the trouble, no doubt!"

"You do not then expect Mr. Suett to escort you home?" Sophia replied, with evident surprise—and perhaps some other feeling, for a dark red spot appeared, and burned for a moment on her brow.

"You will have to do him the homage of a first visit, I am afraid, Sophia," I answered, laughingly. "You cannot tell how absorbed in politics he has become. But it was lucky, I should say, that he could not accompany me this morning. No man could have seen Luxmoor's brutality—and not have broken every bone in his skin!"

"That might not be so easy with Luxmoor—he is a master of the science of self-defence, and drunk or sober, is as brave as a lion," Sophia observed, with some vehemence. "But you will do more to ravel my work, by telling what you have witnessed, to your husband, than all

the anonymous letters that perplex the cogitat[illegible]i of my lord bishop. So you must promise [illegible]n dear Hugh-Helena! indeed you must!—[illegible]o to make any mention of the distressing specta[illegible]le you have witnessed, at Plas Newydd!"

"Well! if you will promise to come and see h[illegible]w I can keep a secret, within the next three days!"

Sophia mused deeply for a moment or tw[illegible]o. "Nay, now, dearest," she then observed with a smile that was yet full of uneasiness and hesit[illegible]a-tion, "you really must excuse me for a time! It will not offend you, if I tell you the true reaso[illegible]s why I must decline visiting at Plas Newydd? In the first place, it is impossible for me to e[illegible]n-dure the stupid, ungrammatical insults of yo[illegible]ur mother-in-law! In the next, it is a favouri[illegible]te plan of retaliation with Luxmoor—by way of dastard apology for himself, I presume!—to thro[illegible]w out the basest imputations on my character wi[illegible]th other men! There is a great, buck-faced fello[illegible]w about here—a Squire Gawker—whom he is always, without the slightest reason, throwing in my face! And now he would not scruple, yo[illegible]u may depend upon it, if he saw the least chan[illegible]ce, to renew his old vile scandals in another dire[illegible]c-tion! You understand me, dearest?"

rlatt! He told me himself that he had
er any time whatever to devote to amuse-
ıd the society of persons not immediately
ed with his political objects."
he so much engaged as all that?" Sophia
d, fixing her penetrating gaze upon me.
ust be a good deal changed!—But in the
f my own miseries I have quite forgotten
ire whether your happiness is still as much
a cloud as in those glorious, honeymoon
ours in Scotland, which are still among
ghtest of my recollections?"
question made me pause. It brought
lden and marshalled array a long series
ıts and ideas which had succeeded one
too swiftly to assign each its just place
ue, until that question seemed to bid the

I can and will state truly what this laps time, and more familiar acquaintance with character and manners of my husband, effected for me.

I do not deny that my imagination, and e my heart, had undergone somewhat of that p cess of *disillusion*,—as it may well be called that usually follows the overstrained excitem the frenzy, of a passion such, as I believe had inspired and shared!

No doubt it had happened with me, in union I had formed, in a degree, as on my morable mountain journey. Many a magnifi hue and light had vanished from the peak many a dark valley and turbid torrent had bro on my vision—since those earliest hours of and joy! No doubt I was soon forced to dis in my husband glimpses of the selfishness, a gance, and tyrannical assumption, which to ot have always been marked features in his uni leable, and yet not fixed or loftily unbending ture! Uncongenialities of disposition—eve temperament—could not but occasionally sug themselves to me with painful distinctı There was a coldness and an absence of all thusiasm. in Scarlatt's nature that someti

affected me with a strangely abyssmal sense of repulsion—as if in our inmost essence we were beings alien and opposed!

Scarlatt's mind—I too had learned to perceive—lacked germinative power and native affluence. It was well stored with much of the learning that can be taught, or is taught, in public schools. But the living and animating fire of genius was not aglow in the centre! This I knew, or, rather, I had felt on so many occasions, that the suspicion had already gained some ground in my convictions. I had missed—and speedily—the tone of romantic tenderness that had won me, from my husband's demeanour. But the transforming power of love was still and ever busy in my heart and brain. I had built for my idol so glorified a temple that it was long indeed before I could understand it was not in reality a god!

And up to this period I had in fact little or nothing tangible to complain of in my husband's conduct to me. With all my craving jealousy of affection, I had sense enough to know that I could not expect a husband to continue always a bridegroom. No devotion, no anxiety of love, could exceed those which Scarlatt had displayed

for me during the dangerous periods curred before the birth of my living chil associations riveted him to my heart lion delicate fibres; and now that I blest mother of the infant whose swee babblings would call him father—no saw in the beautiful, innocent face of Herbert the features of my own anc mingled with all that was most attra engaging in his father's fine comple clear, blue, masterful eyes—no woma ever more literally accepted the words riage-plight from wife to husband. I honoured, I obeyed Scarlatt Suett fro most depths of my soul!

CHAPTER V.

A FRIEND IN NEED.

I COULD therefore in all sincerity and truth reply to Sophia's question in terms that satisfied her of my unabated love for my husband, and my conviction of Scarlatt's ardent tenderness for me.

She listened to my glowing and delighted account with apparent satisfaction. With real, I thought it!—perhaps even it might be! Could it be possible she imagined I exaggerated my happiness to deepen the contrast of her misery? Suffering is very unjust!—But Sophia was too profoundly skilled in character and its

influences to be much misled. She spoke of Scarlatt's early projects; of his ambi become a leading politician; of the high formed of him. Were all those impulses in the completeness of his domestic happ Had he resolved to owe to his wife the el he once proposed to achieve for himself? no; Scarlatt had too manly, too aspiring per for that! She elicited from me speedi I had at least some degree of rivalry to from those alluring phantoms of powe vanity!

Time passed rapidly in this kind of cor tion, and I could scarcely tear myself awa this dearly loved and unfortunate friend, t the increasing darkness warned me to be return. Sophia herself, at last openly, e uneasiness at the prospect of my being o on the wild road I had to cross, and cou refrain finally from urging me not to del departure. I ascribed this hurrying whol kind consideration for me—nor am I t hour sure that it was not so! I draw no ence, nor wish any to be drawn, from th that just as Sophia was escorting me ov flowery churchyard—which owed its beau

and elegance, it seemed, entirely to her wish to counteract the gloom of such a spectacle, always in view—Squire Gawker was announced, and made his appearance, bashfully stalking up the avenue of yews.

Gawker was a very awkward, loutish young man, of gigantic stature and strength, terribly sun-freckled, with high cheek bones and sandy red hair; and it certainly struck me a little at the time that he paid a visit so late in the evening, and still in the red coat and boots he had been hunting in probably the whole day, for an exhausted horse, of some fleet race, stood smoking and streaming with perspiration at the gate.

He came also on an errand that appeared to me—and was in reality—a very awkward and foolish mark of homage to a lady—to present Mrs. Luxmoor with the *fox's brush* they had pulled down in the course of the day! But the squire himself evidently thought not lightly of the gift, for until he observed me—I had stopped a short distance behind Mrs. Luxmoor, perceiving the approach of a stranger—he continued to flourish it triumphantly, and, as I thought, rather familiarly, aloft! I saw and heard that

she received the attention with a coldness almost amounting to contemptuous disdain—and, remembering her husband's insulting allusions to this young sporting Hercules, I could well account for it. But not so readily for the surprised and gaping manner of Gawker himself, at the style in which his offering was received, for he wound it sulkily up at once, and muttering, as it seemed to me. "Nay, then, I'll take it where 't'll be more welcome!" Off he strode away like a stunned Goliath! Sophia, herself, plainly saw that this scene required an explanation. She gave it me—with an air of vexation and embarrassment—and as usual taking care, in an underhand way, to inflict some portion of the discomfort she experienced. "It is a great loutish Nimrod who ought to feed on thistles instead of grass!—but who has taken it into his head that I have some influence with a wealthy widow lady living about here, whose fortune he would be glad to secure! And so he comes boring me incessantly, *to direct him how to manage his wooing!*—and even to write him his billets-doux and trash of that sort!"

I returned to Plas Newydd in a much less cheerful mood than I had expected, and withou

having been able to prevail on Sophia to promise to come and see me there. In fact, she at last plainly refused: but on a new ground. Madame Le Crampon was an inmate there; a woman whom she detested from the bottom of her soul, and of whom she naïvely declared that she was—jealous! She laughed indeed as she said so; but reminding me of the particulars she had formerly communicated, she asked me if I did not think she was right not to put such inflammable materials as her husband was composed of in the way of temptation? We both laughed again, and parted without renewing the subject.

As I have said, I returned to Plas Newydd in by no means so cheerful a mood as I had left it; lamenting my friend's fate, and saddened with the recollection that I might be considered in some degree accessory to it, by bringing about the reconciliation between her and her truly detestable partner.

I will be candid, however, and confess that I was not altogether displeased at the indifference, or rather repugnance, evinced by both Scarlatt and Sophia to a renewal of their acquaintance!

I was in a mood nevertheless, after all I had

witnessed, for the reception of evil news; and very bad awaited me!

On arriving at Plas Newydd, I found the whole household in consternation, and Mrs. Suett, in an agony of grief and indignation, scrawling a letter to summon her husband instantly from town. I soon learned the disastrous occasion. My father's long-brooding vengeance had burst at last! Officers of the law had arrived at Plas Newydd very shortly after my departure, who arrested my husband on a charge of abduction! They conveyed him at once before a magistrate, a particular friend of my father's, besides having a private grief of his own against the Suetts—who had refused to take bail; and consequently Scarlatt was committed to the county jail!

And thus the first meeting between my father and husband had been in a position of mutual hostility, as accuser and accused, in a charge of *felony!* It was little consolation to me, under these circumstances, to learn that the insulting violence of Lord Mauleverer's demeanour on the occasion was only surpassed by the forbearance and conciliating tone adopted by Scarlatt. I ever mild answer turned away wrath, his shoul-

have mitigated my father's exasperation!—but it had not done so. For not satisfied with this pounce, Lord Mauleverer had openly applied for and obtained a warrant to secure my person and take me to Mauleverer Castle, as a fugitive, under age, from the lawful authority of my parents!

My absence was, therefore, so far fortunate—and after his committal, Scarlatt had sent his mother home, with all possible speed, to warn me, above all things, to keep myself from falling into my father's power, or the probabilities were that we should be separated as long as his parental dominion lasted! I was then only nineteen. But, more than all this: Mrs. Suett herself had heard Lord Mauleverer expressly command the officers to take care that "no brat, of whatever age," was allowed to accompany me! Mrs. Suett had but just returned from the deplorable scene before the magistrate, and had despatched a messenger to desire me to remain in concealment at Llanhowel, intending to inform the officers that I was gone back to the continent! But being ordered to take a byway, the man had apparently missed me; and Mrs. Suett thought she could at best only have

a very short start of the officers in their post chaise!

My distraction at this dreadful news almost deprived me of any faculty of judgment. I insisted on proceeding at once to join my husband in his captivity! But his mother brought positive instructions from him that I was not to attempt it. Scarlatt had written me a few agitated words in pencil to the same effect, assuring me that he should be bailed in a few days, on application in London, and meanwhile, even peremptorily, commanding me, unless I took my father's view, and disowned him for a husband! to remain in the closest concealment, wherever it might be most feasible to elude research. I proposed in consequence to go back at once to Llanhowel; but Mrs. Suett would not hear of that: it was on the way to Mauleverer; and she was convinced "the woman there" was not to be trusted! She was involved in the same scrape, and to secure indemnity for herself and her rascally husband, she would not hesitate to betray me! I was warmly rebutting this allegation, when the chances of effecting any evasion at all became doubtful. One of our miners, posted for the purpose, came running,

breathlessly, to announce the appearance of a postchaise in the direction my intended capturers might be expected!

The idea of being separated from my child gave me all the energy and resources of desperation! And, while Mrs. Suett wrung her hands in despair, a glance I caught of the distant Ap Howel ruin suddenly suggested the recollection of my former proposed refuge in it—and the possibility of finding one there in this emergency. No one would dream of seeking me in a pile of ruins! I told Mrs. Suett my intentions, snatching up my child, in readiness for flight, from the fine lace-curtained cradle her fond pride and prodigality had provided for it. And I remember she made several objections: that certain "old rubbishing people of Sir Vivian's" lived there now, who might not give me a very kind welcome: that we were not on very friendly terms with Sir Vivian himself: that he was "cheek by jowl" with Lord Mauleverer, and being hourly expected at the ruin, would "most likely split where I was to be found!" The very notion of anything disloyal or unkind on the part of young Ap Howel appeared to me preposterous! And Mrs. Suett

herself admitted, in reply to my warm negation
the suggestion, that there was no probability in
Only her son might think so, as they had nev
been very good friends! I soon, however, co
vinced her that we had no time to study niceti
like these—and within a few minutes of t
receipt of the intelligence, I was hastening, at
speed I knew not till then I could exert, up t
steep crest of the Howel Mynydd.

I was attended by my nurse with lit
Herbert, only—Mrs. Suett remained to prese
a good countenance against the perquisition
the agents of the rusty, one-sided laws put in
such vigorous action by my father.

It was about ten at night when I and r
attendant—luckily, a plump, unexcitable Flemi
—reached the summit of the hill. And h
often, as I heard the melancholy, raving voice
the torrent of the Rhaiadr Dhu, on that hurri
transit, did I mentally repeat the words of t
despairing Bronwen of the White Neck—*O b*
y wnaf fi?

I was in a really fearful state of exhausti
and dismay when I arrived in the midst of th
dark, mouldering masses of ruins, where I han
knew how to select the inhabited portion. I h

no guide now; and it was a night so dark that every indication was confounded under its black canopy. I had not recovered my strength completely since the birth of little Herbert—and I suppose I must have looked more like a hunted hare than a rational creature when I paused to endeavour to ascertain whither to direct my steps, amidst the masses of fallen and falling masonry.

On a sudden I heard the sound of a harp—of a legitimate ancient Welsh harp—touched evidently by the hand of a master. With an air, too, in strange unison with the disastrous circumstances of the undreamed-of auditor!—the exquisitely plaintive one known in England as "Poor Mary Anne;" in Wales, by its proper original title, "Ar hyd y nôs." It was played with a equal tenderness and pathos by the invisible musician. But my chief motive in listening was to ascertain the direction whence the sounds came; and while pausing for this purpose, the prelude ceased, and a voice which it seemed to me I remembered, and yet could not fully associate with any individual, began to sing to the accompaniment of those mournful chords. It was a full, rich, manly voice—fraught with feeling and

expression. And to my great surprise, tho
the words of the verses were in Welsh, e
one of them seemed to finish with a so
exactly resembling my own name — Hu
Helena! And then it was—I know not
what compelling link of ideas—the convic
flashed upon me that the singer was yo
Ap Howel! But it was an inspiration of
rious excitement, doubtless, that induced m
summon an assistance, I felt an unspeak
conviction would not fail me in the hour of
need, by shrieking loud enough to reach
the fatal words: *O beth y wnaf fi?*

The song and music ceased suddenly.
confusion of several voices came to my
apparently in mingled alarm and remonstra
Then a ray of light streamed from an ope
door, at some distance amidst the ruins, a
figure appeared at it, throwing the glare o
pine brand, evidently just snatched from a
over the whole surrounding scene, with an
pression of the most intense anxiety in
gazing visage. Two old but benevolent-look
women's faces peered over the young m
shoulder—for it was a young man—an
sightless and very old and snowy-haired

still fine-featured venerable man's, completed the group thus illuminated.

He was greatly changed, but I instantly recognised Sir Vivian Ap Howel! I called him by his name—and as if with the word he was beside me—arriving just in time to prevent my sinking to the ground with excess of fatigue and emotion. The two women had meanwhile followed in his steps, though with evident caution —probably under the influence of some superstitious apprehension.

I shall never forget the indescribably mingled tones in which Sir Vivian exclaimed,—"'Good God! it is *Hugh-Helena*!—It is *Mrs. Scarlatt Suett*!—She has not been enabled to effect her flight from her father's barbarous frenzy!—She comes to me—to us—for refuge!"

His figure, though now much taller and more muscularly developed, was still very slender, and gave few indications of the strength he must have exerted in supporting my almost powerless frame into the tower.

How kind, how patient, how wisely helpful and sympathetic did this young man show himself during all the paroxysm of grief and terror that came over me even when I felt myself

placed in comparative safety! How watcl
he directed and stimulated the attention o
two kind old women! With what tender
miseration did he hear and reply to al
wailings of anguish and despair! With
unwearied goodness did he listen to my reite
and incoherent story of the disasters that
driven me to take refuge under his ruined
And although—by an ungrateful kind of in
—amidst the really half-delirious effusions c
gratitude for his interposition, I kept ass
him I had no notion he himself was
when I sought for refuge at Castell
Howel!

He explained as repeatedly that it was
by chance he was there indeed; that he hapj
to hear from the friend with whom I c
sponded—from Mrs. Luxmoor—that min
my husband's return was expected, and he
hoped to conclude some unpleasant busine
had at Plas Newydd before that event occu
But he had been misinformed or mistaken i
time: and had only himself arrived at Ap H
within a few hours—being on his arrival i
grieved to learn the unhappy circumstance
had taken place so recently at Plas Newydd

Finding I still laboured under apprehensions of pursuit, Sir Vivian interspersed his explanations with the most earnest assurances that I was now safe from it—that even if the officers traced me he could secure my evasion from the tower; and would defend me to the utmost of his power! He barricaded the door and windows of the apartment, to convince me of his sincerity, and even went so far, moved by my almost frenzied entreaties, as to make a solemn asseveration that, at all events, they should not separate me from my child!

Hours passed almost exclusively in these effusions and consolations—in panic alarms and quietings—until about midnight, when a messenger arrived from Mrs. Suett to state that the officers were gone, after having, by virtue of their warrant, searched Plas Newydd "from garret to cellar!" But they were suspected to be still lurking in observation about the house, and therefore Mrs. Suett advised me to remain where I was until more certain information could be obtained.

These tidings tranquillised me so far that I was now enabled to understand the position in which I found myself, and to take a rational

survey of the scene and persons amid whic had placed myself.

It was the same apartment of the ruin as in which I had formerly taken shelter. Bu was now decently furnished, though in a homely and unpretending style, combining requisites of a kitchen and a parlour. It see probable that other chambers in the tower been placed in habitable order, for the blind harper, Caradoc, and his two daughters appare resided in it. Indeed they told me so, w Mrs. Suett's message had been delivered to as, with a needless reflection that dyed hitherto pallid cheeks with colour, I said, I it was impossible: at every risk I must retur Plas Newydd at once: there was no place wl I could stay for a whole night, up there, I thoug

"There are rooms in the tower which h been prepared for my reception—and I can accommodated, I have no doubt, as usual, Plas Newydd!" Vivian replied, with a d flush also—"I did not intend to trouble good people there with my company again— there is *nothing* I will not do with pleasure t can be of service to you, Mrs.——Mrs.— Suett!—at this unhappy juncture!"

I would fain not dwell on these particulars of self-devotion and chivalrous delicacy and generosity, exhibited by Vivian Ap Howel towards me, in every stage of our intercourse saving only the unutterable last! But I must do him the little justice still in my power!—It was determined upon as he had proposed—and by this singular evolution of circumstance, I became the guest of a host whom I dispossessed of his accommodations to make them my own.

It is not necessary I should dilate on this episode, though it was afterwards wrested so cruelly and unjustly to my disadvantage. With what injustice, in fact, may be ascertained from the true assurance I give the reader, that nearly the whole of that first night I spent under the decayed roof of Castell Ap Howel, I devoted to the consideration how I might best influence its young owner to become an intercessor on behalf of my husband and myself with my exasperated sire.

Sophia's inuendoes—my own observation—had satisfied me I still possessed a degree of interest in the kindness and sympathy of Sir Vivian, which I thought might be drawn into the course I desired them to take. Mere youth

as he was, he was known to enjoy much
deration and intimacy at Mauleverer. I
at once and spontaneously expressed his di
bation of my father's rigid measures. I
blinded by the excess of my affection
husband and child to perceive how gre
unjustifiable, were the sacrifices I was al
demand of him in their names!. But
Scarlatt was torn so relentlessly from me
certainly not known how much I loved h
few months previously, when he had
himself proposed that I should solicit Sir
interposition on our behalf, I had rejec
notion with a kind of contumely! S
however, could not have been aware at t
of the peculiar reasons I had, not to
present myself as a petitioner, in such
to young Ap Howel! But now every co
tion saving the possibility of redeemi
husband and child and myself from the
menacing us, seemed puerile, and unwo
be weighed in the balance!

Yet I wonder now at my confidence
boundless generosity which only—I shoul
known—could have responded to my
—at the seemingly unsupported consciou

must have possessed of the dominion I could exercise over the young man's motives and will, when on the following day, at our first meeting, I implored Sir Vivian, in every form of earnest intreaty at my command, to become the mediator between my angry father and my husband and myself for pardon—or at least desistance from the vengeful course the former had entered on.

Ap Howel himself was, perhaps, struck with some surprise at the unbounded confidingness of this demand. But the lavish tenderness and generosity of his own nature suggested to him readily excuses for the seeming selfishness and forgetfulness of all but myself and mine implied in the petition! He, too, was moved by the innocent beauty of my child, to which I appealed, in my intreaties that he would plead it to melt its stern grandsire's indignation! He took the little creature in his arms, kissed it, and returning the infant to me—not to the nurse who expected it—while one large, dark tear, like a thunder-drop, fell and splashed on its sweet, rosy visage, he promised me, without a word of hesitation, instantly to proceed to Mauleverer and do all that lay in his power to fulfil my wishes.

I furnished him with a full detail of what my

husband would do and promise, to procure his father-in-law's forgiveness; and once or twice certainly a smile of some feeling, nigh akin to contempt, glimmered over Vivian's quivering and sensitive upper lip. But I had the good news of his having departed for Mauleverer, on the mission, to announce, when Mrs. Suett waddled up the hill about noonday, to pay me a visit. On my part I learned then, with surprise, that he had not resumed his quarters at Plas Newydd nor had Mrs. Suett seen him at all since his return.

Mr. Craddock, whoever—so Mrs. Suett, much to his annoyance, always persisted in styling Caradoc, the blind harper, whose family tenanted the ruin—had an explanation to offer. The young chief—so he always styled Sir Vivian—had been seized with a fit of restlessness to which he was subject, as all his ancestors had been before him, and had endeavoured to walk it off by wandering over the Howell Mynydd until dawn.

But, in spite of this first gleam of success, the events of the day were but slightly encouraging. I received a letter, it is true, from Scarlatt, urging upon me the very course I had adopted

—at least so far as regarded making an appeal to the friendly interposition of young Ap Howel, so soon as he should arrive—and forbidding me, under any fancy of alleviating his annoyances by my presence, to come near him in his place of confinement, where I might be so easily watched and captured. But Sir Vivian returned with yet more disastrous tidings. He had not seen Lord Mauleverer, who was set out in person to London, to procure a writ of Habeas Corpus, in order to compel the Suetts to surrender me into his custody. And the pleadings on that writ, an attorney, whom Mrs. Suett had sent for, informed us would involve, and perhaps adversely, the validity of my stolen marriage with Scarlatt Suett and the legitimacy of the birth of my child! It was but a slight mitigation to learn that Vivian had seen and conversed with my mother, who was heart-stricken at what had happened, had done all she could to dissuade her lord from the course he had taken, and promised that she would exert every effort, on his return, to induce him to relinquish his violent purposes. Lord Mauleverer was expected home with his writ in three days, as the courts were then sitting. But I formed no hopes from this interposition, knowing

ray of light; and at my earnest, almost intreaties, Sir Vivian consented to has once to London, on my father's steps deavour to persuade him to relinquish h lessly vengeful proceedings!

He did not lose a single hour in dep this errand of redemption. And what did the generous ardour and singlene youth's devotion present to the demean father of the man whose chief possess placed in so much jeopardy, when he few hours after Sir Vivian had set ou journey to London!

John Thomas had not received letter, containing an account of our He had left town immediately on the ir brought to him of the fête given on return; and with the intention, we soo

But he announced a foregone conclusion, when he avowed it was no longer his intention to resign his seat—that his son's extravagance and debts, and the extraordinary avowal he had made of a change in the "family principles" on the important question of the Corn Laws—independently of "the mess he had got into"—had decided him for some time in the resolution!

John Thomas otherwise most certainly showed by no means the particular kind of sympathy and resentment he might have been expected to exhibit in his son's misfortunes. He declared, to all who chose to listen, that Scarlatt richly deserved all he had got, by allying himself to a pack of insolent aristocrats—who were quite right to worry so strange a dog for sneaking into their kennel! The best thing, he said, that could happen to us all now, would be that the marriage should in reality be declared null and void, and my Lord Standstill Dustbin have his daughter back again! Damaged goods certainly! but it was not *his* fault, if "the man" was bent on proving that his daughter was not a fellow's wife with whom she had been living these three years—and his grandson a bastard! And so he would tell "his lordship, forsooth," soon to his

face, he hoped, on the hustings—as parli
was just on the point of dissolution! Mea
his son must do the best he could in the
he had run himself into! But, of course
such a charge hanging over him, he could
dream of having any chance for the repre
tion he wanted to oust his own father in!

In short, the selfish pseudo-democra
played the worst side of his character, i
worst possible light, on this occasion; and
told poor, whimpering Mrs. Suett, I was
was not under his roof at the time, as the
unkindness he exhibited would have com
me to leave it at once, even if I had h
other shelter to seek than the woods o
Howel Mynydd!

I cannot bear to dwell on this afflicting
bition of the action of inordinate and egot
passions! I turn with a sense of joyful re
mingled, yet, how inexpressibly with pain
the contrast offered in the whole cond
Vivian Ap Howel, throughout this disa
affair.

After three days' absence, he return
Castell Ap Howel with a faintly encou
glimpse of success. His delineation o

despair—of the beauty of my child—of the terrible consequences in disgrace and ruin to us all, that must follow the steps he had entered on—won at length so far upon my father's better feelings that he had consented to desist from his application to compel my surrender: on the condition only, nevertheless, that I made it a voluntary one! And he had yielded also to suffer my child to accompany me—in the return he insisted I should make to Mauleverer. But his animosity against my husband and the whole Suett family continued unabated! He would not promise to relinquish any of the means of coercion or vengeance in his power against them! On the contrary, he seemed resolved to pursue them in every extremity that laws, contrived by angry fathers surely, could place in his power!

At first I rejected, at once, and with the most positive decision, the bare notion of consenting to sever my fortunes from those of my husband —of yielding to my father's tyrannous will so abjectly—including, I doubted not, a separation of years from my beloved husband! But Vivian reasoned with me in his sympathetic and truthfully earnest way, and induced me to reconsider this first natural impulse. He represented to

me the certainty that my refusal would induc my father to proceed at once in his efforts t annul the marriage, and possibly bring disgrac and dishonour on my whole connexion wit Scarlatt, and its issue—certainly, provoke scandalous conflict, and throw a slur on m child's derivation, which, however decided, would be difficult ever after to efface! Whereas if I yielded to my father's will in this instanc the submission would have the best effect upo him, and prepare him for the future efforts which I could devote myself in bringing about general reconciliation. "And believe me, Hug Helena!—pardon me, if I cannot yet bring m self to call you by the name which is now you too!" Vivian said, with his slightly sarcastic an playful but still very melancholy smile—"Belie me—it is impossible for any one—even obstinately relentless and determined a man your father! long to resist anything you ha set the true eloquence of your honest and tend heart to win! Do you know, I myself ca down here, all resentment and relentlessne against the Suetts—although you had becom one of them!"—He checked himself sudden and then added in another tone: "I believe yo

have only to give signs of external submission —to plead your cause in person—to gain it! Your mother will be there to intercede for you —I will do my best—and I am convinced that everything will become possible and feasible when you are removed from the society and surrounding of the Suett family in general, whose vulgarity and insolence your father detests beyond expression! Scarlatt is handsome—*still*, I presume!—and *he* has received a good —college—education! Your father will be brought to *endure him* much more easily, trust me, without his friends about him!"

Remembering the recent coarse displays of the elder Suett, I was the more readily influenced by this argument. I perceived some impropriety also in my remaining at Castell Ap Howel, receiving the hospitality of so young and unmarried a host! yet I could not bear the thought of returning to Plas Newydd—where, besides, I should not be safe an hour from my father's vengeful researches. I was constitutionally rash and precipitate in all my resolutions! But I own that, after all, I was to blame to adopt so decisive a resolution without my husband's permission! In short, I resolved to return at once

to Mauleverer, sending Scarlatt an account
motives that influenced me, and of Sir V
generous interposition.

I was not restrained by Mrs. Suett's
declarations that I ought never to think o
to Mauleverer unless my husband was to
ceived there with me and "in triumph
declined John Thomas's offer of his c
and four; and finally, in a hired vehicle,
panied by my nurse and child, and un
escort of Sir Vivian—without whose count
and protection I felt I should never hav
to enter the presence of my irritated par
returned, after my long *erraticism*, to Mau
Castle.

CHAPTER VI.

RECONCILIATION.

VIVIAN'S knowledge of my father's character, and of the means of influencing it, had not deceived him. My unreserved submission and return disarmed so much of his wrath, that my reception was even more than pardoning: it was tender. It is probable he intended to receive me with the upbraidings and reproaches he no doubt considered due to my want of duty, and the disgraceful derogation he believed in his haughty spirit I had brought on our name. But when, in the midst of my father's first vehement words, I sunk on my knees at his feet, and raised my infant in mute supplication: when my mother, tottering in, threw her arms

round his neck and mine, and drew us both to her bosom in an agony of joy, and love, and sorrow, which was a rare climax in her undemonstrative and seemingly passionless existence: when the young soldier, Ap Howel, himself sobbed aloud, and rushed from among us, vanquished by the sensibility of his brave and tender heart—my father, too, melted; my father, too, joined in the solemn blessing by which my mother consecrated my child hers, his—the child of the house of Mauleverer!

It was several months, nevertheless, before this reconciliation extended its healing wings over my husband also. And meanwhile I had to endure restless upbraidings and reproaches for what he chose to designate a desertion, which all my assurances and entreaties could not for a long time mitigate. Nevertheless, as a first fruit, all proceedings on my father's part against Scarlatt and his family were abandoned. No obstacles were offered to his being set at liberty; and he returned to Plas Newydd, where the open rupture with his own father, that speedily followed the event, certainly facilitated his reconcilement with mine.

At this calm interval of time, I am not dis-

defend my father's vindictive exaction
s my husband's too ready acquiescence
condition the former placed on per-
for Scarlatt to make a first visit at
er. My husband's electioneering ad-
l appeared; and it was stipulated
se of the resistance of the elder Suett
solution of the Conservative party in
y, to oust him, on the first oppor-
om his seat, his son was to engage
ontest against him!
t, on his side, adroitly required that,
t too obvious a scandal in the concus-
should be allowed at once to assume
ship's and his beloved wife's family

nent was not, however, dissolved so
as expected; and had it not been for
tion in which I found myself, soon to
he mother of my daughter, Evelyn, it
le Lord Mauleverer would have pro-
nuch longer his resentment, and its
igns, against one whom he continued
pon as an interloper and intruder in his

this period I had gained almost won-

derfully in my father's love and favour; chiefly, I believe, through the exceeding fondness he took at once for his little grandson. It was not difficult for Lord Mauleverer to trace the lineaments of his own ancient race in the splendid little fellow's developing countenance; and for their sake he forgave Herbert his ruddy bloom of complexion and the golden tinge in his hair, though he ridiculed the latter at first by declaring that the child was a perfect dandelion! My father finally lost the energy to refuse me what he plainly discerned was an object of hope and constant solicitude with me.

He continued, certainly, to declare a total incredulity in the assurances I gave him of the disinterestedness of Scarlatt's attachment to me in the first instance—of his ignorance of my identity with the heiress of Mauleverer. But they had some influence in bringing about his final yielding, I should imagine.

The first interview between my father and husband was of perilous and doubtful issue. The opposition between the men was typified in their very aspects and persons. My father looked like a portrait of Velasquez, stepped all dark, and stately, and stern, from an old can-

vass; Scarlatt, as if he had just descended, in the newest and brightest of oils, from the gilded frame-work of a fashionable academician's most recent handiwork.

But, on the whole, they got on together better than either my mother or I had ventured to hope. After all, Scarlatt had some reason for the demeanour he adopted; and the despotism of my father's temper speedily found itself on congenial ground in the deference, amounting to awe, which his now received son-in-law exhibited for all he said, or even looked, during that first memorable interview.

Once at Mauleverer, Scarlatt devoted himself—even in my judgment—with too whole and implicit a submission and adulation, to win my father's further favour. Yet it is an indisputable fact that he succeeded for a while.

I did not at the time understand, or appreciate in its full force, a motive that no doubt greatly influenced Scarlatt in taking so decided a part against his own father, whose wealth at least should apparently have rendered him an object of more dutiful observance with a son trained in such maxims as John Thomas's had been. Sir Vivian, who visited occasionally at

Mauleverer, before he proceeded to join his regiment, for the first time, in its quarters in the south of England, informed me of the fact I allude to. But very carelessly, and as if it was one that scarcely needed to be taken into consideration. He had consented to waive for a time the decision of his claims for a restoration of the Howel Mynydd property; but in the conference that took place on the subject, the elder Suett had so far admitted their legality, as to propose that on Vivian's attaining his majority, the whole case should be submitted to arbitration. This proposal, Vivian observed—and to me only—he had consented to.

It did not, I say, at the time strike a person so ignorant of all kinds of business matters as myself, that the Suetts must veritably discern a great flaw in their title of possession to propose or yield to such a compromise! Most assuredly they must have seen greater hopes of advantage to be derived from the generous forbearance of the young heir, than they could hope to find in any chicanery of the law! And thus, I did not understand all that was magnanimous and self-denying in the young man's efforts to bring about a reconciliation, which must even in the

respect be likely to deprive him of his most powerful friend and supporter! Neither did I know till long, long afterwards, that his father's plan of arrangement received the most persevering opposition from Scarlatt, and that their first open quarrel was on the subject!

It was not from Scarlatt, of course—still less from the modest generosity of Ap Howel himself ——that I was likely to learn that the latter's chief motive in refraining to urge his claims to an immediate and legal adjustment, lay in his desire not to throw further discredit on the family whose alliance I had formed—diminish the only lustre to which it could pretend, or give pretext for my father's animosity to increase the obstacles to the restoration of that peace I so ardently desired to bring about between him and my husband.

I neither conceal, nor wish to conceal this further—that during the slow progress of the reconciliation, to effect which I had devoted myself, Sir Vivian availed himself of several short leaves of absence to appear at Castell ap Howel, which he was beginning to place in some repair! With the sole object, so far as I understood or dreamed, of witnessing the progress of

those works. And whenever he chose to come over to Mauleverer, during these seasons, he was always a welcome guest. He was a particular favourite with my father, and, in spite of his youth, a companion in whose society he took great pleasure. My mother loved him as a son! And surely I should have been a most ungrateful creature had I not been among those who felt and expressed the greatest satisfaction in these visits. But never—so may heaven help or desert me in my dying hour!—had I the least reason to suspect the existence of that misplaced passion, which it would answer no purpose now to deny, continued ever an inmate of the poor youth's too sensitive and unchanging heart!

No word or look from Vivian ever gave me cause to dread the unhappy secret. I had come to regard the circumstances that marked our early acquaintance, as merely eccentric exhibitions of the precocious imagination and premature moral development distinguishable in every stage of Vivian's advance to manhood: effusions of the romance and excitability of his overstrained and feverish temperament! It did not even strike me as a coincidence, that after my

husband's formal reception at Mauleverer, he ceased to take such delight in his visits to Ap Howel, and, indeed, did not make his appearance again among us until he came to take a farewell before embarking with his regiment, which was under orders for India, and was already lying at Plymouth.

I particularly remember it was the very day Scarlatt was returned, without opposition, member of parliament, in the seat his father had so long occupied. The elder Suett now held the unpopular principles amongst a constituency chiefly agricultural. But he made a virtue of necessity, vociferously declaring himself too great a friend to "purity of representation" to use such means of contest as might give him a chance of balancing that circumstance, and my father's interest. Rich as he owned himself to be, he added, that he knew pleasanter ways of spending his money than in procuring "a squat" among a lot of fellows who had scarcely patience to hear a man open his lips, and were always crying "Question, question!" whenever anything but a "spawn of aristocracy" undertook to enlighten them!

I myself hoped that the unnatural kind of

conflict offered, and consciousness that he had so long and publicly announced his intentions in favour of his son, weighed something with John Thomas. But, certain it is, he retired from the field before the affair came to any decisive issue, and—my father had the pleasure to learn from his son-in-law—in a state of mortification and defeat that almost balanced the sufferings inflicted on himself years previously by his success! The whirligig of time indeed brings about his revenges!

However, as I have said, my husband and his reconciled father-in-law were away at the county town, engaged in the usual festivities of an election triumph—when Sir Vivian arrived at Mauleverer to take his farewell.

I had remained at home with my mother, whose exceeding languor and debility rendered every kind of excitement painful to her, and who could not bear to be deprived of my society for any lengthened time since it had been restored to her after so disastrous an interval. Indeed I have some hope that my devotion to my dear mother during that short remaining period of her languishing existence, in a measure atoned for the grief and discomfort I had been the means of previously bringing upon her.

To complete the singular revolution of circumstances, Sophia Sutcliffe—Mrs. Luxmoor—was with me, on a visit for the day. Not for longer: she always, and with immoveable resolution, refused to stay away a single night from Llanhowel parsonage. It is horrible, it is disgusting, to have to relate it! But the unhappy woman *dared not* trust her vile husband, even for that brief interval, under the same roof with the young girls whom her really thoughtful and judicious superintendence was educating into good servants, or mistresses of rural families, in her house!

Even his own home—the roof beneath which his wife dwelt—still young, still one of the most fascinating and engaging of women, even in the opinion of the depraved wretch himself—still not unworthy of the deepest affection and respect—not yet corrupted to the quality of the corruption she dwelt withal—nothing in heaven or earth, in fact, was sacred to that detestable man!

Yet even under these conditions, and when I was established at Mauleverer, where it could not have been so irksome for her to come to as Plas Newydd, Sophia continued a very unfrequent visitor. There seemed no other very valid reason

herself, she declared, to so
his brutality towards her
all things, she repeatedly a
in her eyes, to spare hersel
exposure of the true state o
them. And at her cont
I concealed them also, so fa
to me.

Perhaps if I had stated
should not so readily have
Mauleverer—at all events
Scarlatt found the abilities
in language, and knowledge
of infinite use to him in the
on. And Luxmoor took
conduct himself at Maulev
seemed to give a practical r

from Scarlatt, Luxmoor continued to insinuate against his wife. He pretended to be jealous of her with the sporting squire, their neighbour—and even of a poor young curate of the next parish, whom Sophia was frequently obliged to request to perform his duties in church ministrations, when he had incapacitated himself.

She herself told me that she liked this young man—a pale, consumptive youth of two-and-twenty—because she thought he somewhat resembled her father.

Luxmoor even strove to apologise for such parts of his conduct as he knew could not but be extensively reported, on the pretence of being driven to drink by domestic unhappiness! He would have had it believed that Sophia—who seemed to every one else so mild and patient in her temper—was a perfect fury to him! He had even the grotesque absurdity to declare that she could scold worse with her silence, than other women with their tongues. Then again I heard that Luxmoor should aver she had become an insupportable pedant!—refused him any comfort of society—and had in fact taken to bury herself among books, like a German professor! Scarlatt pretended that he had himself observed a good

deal of foundation for this last charge. Ha not noticed the pragmatical and conceited m ner in which she presumed lately to join in c versation, "on subjects which it was quite i possible any woman could in the least und stand," with my father—with Lord Maulever

And true it is, I had noticed, and with sa faction, the rapid progress Sophia made, fr the most frozen and austere of all possible t rations, to favour and even a kind of intim with Lord Mauleverer! My mother's const kindness—tenderness indeed—towards her, co have been no element in her success. It evok on the contrary, unpleasing associations—a Sophia had further to combat the conviction s lurking in my father's mind, that she had taken active part in the conspiracy to which he co tinued to impute my flight to and from P Newydd. She owed the triumph she fina achieved solely to her faculty of comprehendi the weak points and master impulses of tho who approached her, and of turning them to h own purposes.

Her progress was so gradual, too!—from t first downcast humility of the introduction I ga her—almost by accident—to the gracious fam

liarity my father finally took her into, talking with her for hours on subjects I myself had no notion she understood anything about at all! Scarlatt even took the fanciful suspicion that she devoted herself to a course of dry reading, infinitely irksome to herself, but which enabled her to keep up a position of "parrot-knowledgeableness" in the discussions Lord Mauleverer liked best to exercise his profound and metaphysical habits of analysis upon!

But I was far from sharing the strange idea Luxmoor infused into my husband, and Scarlatt at last communicated without disguise to me! I need not, however, at this moment anticipate the wounding and degrading imputation.

No man was ever better qualified than my father to appreciate the superior qualities of Sophia's mind. Still it really was wonderful with what skill she managed so soon to overcome his strong prejudices, and moreover his disdain that any person of rank originally so inferior should presume to possess those superiorities; or that they should enforce a claim for their possessor to a position of equality with birth and hereditary station! But Sophia, by what I considered to be one of the marked and

most singular paradoxes in her
seemed only to apply herself the
siduously to remove those ingraine
sessions and natural counteractions.
long well pleased to witness how she
—how my father grew gradually ever
her society, until at last he almost alv
one of our company, for a time, on
In a haughty, condescending manne
But Sophia hit his taste admirabl
respect also. She never presumed
favour; and nothing could exceed the
of her submission to the pride and a
of Lord Mauleverer's habitual demean
yet there was nothing of an undue or
deference in her manner. Sophia co
upright! You would have said, for
part, that she was yielding a homag
owed to natural superiorities rather
factitious usurpations of society. It
that rendered her so pleasing to my
at the same time distrustful sire; and
grand distinction between her efforts
favour and those of Scarlatt.

I should have mentioned that every
suspicion had vanished from my mir

tion to the circumstances of the early acquaintance between my husband and Sophia. The first meeting between them, after so long a remotion, was alone sufficient to dispel all apprehension.

Scarlatt, involved at the time in his active projects of ambition, seemed literally to have forgotten who she was, when, happening to bustle into my apartment for some papers he wanted, he found me *tête-à-tête* with Sophia. I believe it was even her third or fourth visit to Mauleverer before she saw him! And no doubt she was altered considerably in person—latterly, with the anxiety and constant turmoil she lived in—somewhat for the worse; but one would not have thought to such an extent! Still there was nothing whatever of affectation to be noted in Scarlatt's apparent forgetfulness; and Sophia herself probably felt so. But the perfect equanimity with which she recalled herself to my husband's recognition, by the name of Luxmoor—the cold indifference he displayed at the announcement—the little trouble he took to make his brief tarriance in the apartment agreeable or cordial—would have contented any person the most disposed to draw unfavourable

however, which did a litt
will have a formidable riv
Mrs. Pomeroy!"—(My
quently myself, had the
license to assume the
happy the woman who n
husband's devotion to a
sleep on the security tha
mischief than making o
speech on Popery or sugar
the morning!"

On other occasions, w
longer opportunities of o
I did indeed, at times, t
thing of scrutiny in the
mostly devoted to the
interviews!

was much better informed of the real state of things at Plas Newydd than I was! A woman in reality of so proud and disdainful a spirit was more likely to repay Scarlatt's scornful indifference with hatred and contempt than any other feeling! But it possibly amused her keen and sarcastic spirit of observation to endeavour to penetrate the core of the outward seemings she witnessed—to ascertain whether the mock sun which she had herself raised in my dazzled vision still appeared to me the veritable King of Light!

But she saw little at this time to reward the analysis. No affection could be stronger than mine for my husband. Scarlatt's passion, at least for the personal qualities he could appreciate in me, and consciousness how much depended on preserving my attachment unshaken towards him, made him almost as tender and devoted a husband as he had been a lover.

Sophia, at all events, seemed to consider that nothing could exceed our happiness—to judge from her frequent expressions to that effect, and the poignant and mortifying contrasts she drew between her own condition and mine.

But, as a general fact, she was not given to

complaint. She did not take the ted
sure so many unhappy and wronged v
in dwelling on their domestic grievan
allowed even my compassion and symp
an occasional glimpse into that darl
of her existence—terrifying as a glin
the bright sunshine into a slaughter-ho

Undoubtedly Sophia Sutcliffe was o
most deplorable of that numerous bar
tims who by our laws find themselves i
fastened in the fetters of an indissolu
to vile and heartless men—even at tin
worst of felons. The wretch who
escapes from the rope of the hangmar
to finish his days in a remote and dis
exile, is yet supposed to keep bounc
by what should be the holiest of ties,
cent partner of his punishment—not g

The secret of Sophia's quietism and
resignation lay, in fact, in one word—

No possible alleviation of her fate
looked for, saving—dreadful alternative!
verge, I believe, she was even then ten
from which she yet shrunk—saving i
the deepest dye on her own part!

At times she would say laughingly

sorrowful laughter it was!) that she *dared not complain!* It would cost her a "good beating," if any revelations she could be supposed to vent came to Luxmoor's ears!—besides the chances of losing their seven hundred a-year! "And then what an alternative for us!—either to starve, or earn one's living honestly!"

I had myself the conviction—witnessing all the barbarous, merciless, degrading treatment she endured, seeming anxious only to avoid any public scandal on it—that Sophia had not yet been enabled to vanquish her early attachment for the wretch who so unkindly repaid her devotion! I do not know that I was quite mistaken; but all this uncomplaining patience—this silent hugging of the mortal agony in the breast—appeared to me irresistible evidences of a lingering sentiment of the kind. Insensible to pecuniary considerations myself—almost, in fact, ignorant of the value of money—I did not believe in any such absorbing anxiety on her part to preserve the excellent income derived from her husband's abused "cure of souls." Yet, strangely enough! I had all the time the consciousness that a discontent unutterably profound and dangerous

gnawed at her chains in the dark beneath all these shows of resignation!

It is a problem that still sometimes recurs to me—Might Sophia have been not only an unharmful but useful and salutary member of society but for the reprobate vileness of the man's conduct towards her? Had there ever been a possible release for her from his pestilent association, might she have righted herself by the force of her own strong mind, and the balance in influence of early good impressions? If so accursed be the laws that would not suffer it that kept in forced conjunction vitality with the corruption of moral death, and made Sophia—what she became—and thereby me also—what I am!

CHAPTER VII.

A FAREWELL.

My mother reclined on a sofa, and little Herbert, wearied with some essays at walking, was asleep, nestling in her kind bosom. Gelert, who—I cannot write him *which*—had ever, since my return, been indulged in his decided preference for interiors of castles rather than of hutches—lay at the foot of the sofa, gravely on guard. We seemed all, save the sleeping infant, to be listening, with much interest and attention, to the perusal of one of Sophia's first essays in authorship. She read it to us in that sweet, clear, equable voice of hers, that sounded like the murmuring of a breeze among honeysuckles

—so low, tranquilly-toned, and redolent of all soft thoughts and images!

It was a quiet little village story, perfectly simple in its language and construction. Little would you have thought that gentle breeze over a verdant English down, could ever sweep into a simoom of the desert!

I am now convinced Sophia was almost making a jest of my mother and myself—mocking us in her secret soul—when she recited to us those simple, clear-aired legends as true effusions of her dark and complicated genius! To what end? I cannot say; unless that she feared to give an insight into the turbid vehemence of her nature, and awaken the suspicion and dread the unknown and powerful are apt to stir, one would deem, even in the unsentient things within the scope of their influence!

It was admirable, however, I thought, this little tale of Sophia's, in its tender and pathetic simplicity; Wordsworthian. Founded on fact, too, she told us. The story of a rustic youth, betrothed to a village maiden, who was accidentally drowned in attempting to cross the ford of the Rhaiadr Dhu, on an excursion to visit his sweetheart in a neighbouring dell. The lasting

fidelity of this poor bereaved one—her death, very aged, still lamenting the lover of her youth with an unchanged heart—was the subject-matter of the tale. It brought tears several times to my eyes, as I bent over the embroidery with which I was amusing myself; and my mother's plaintive face grew yet more sadly beautiful as she listened.

We were thus engaged, when a servant announced Sir Vivian Ap Howel. My mother, who always liked to see him, and had of late been wondering at his protracted absence, gave immediate directions that he should be admitted. In he came—and, for the first time since he had joined it, in the uniform of his corps, under a military riding cloak. He looked very haggard and pale, I thought, in it, but soldierly and even stately; and for the first time it struck me distinctly how much his figure was improved in the interval since I remembered him a sickly, crippled lad.

We all received him with marks of cordiality, but my mother alone without embarrassment. Both Sophia and I coloured. It was never absent from her mind that Vivian was acquainted with a degrading secret concerning her! As for

me, I flushed with the warmth of the satisfaction I really felt at my youthful friend's reappearance.

I noticed that our visitor only bowed to Sophia. He shook my hand with an electric tingling of the nerves in his own, which I felt through my whole frame. Then, hastening to my mother's couch, he kissed her's tenderly and respectfully, as was his wont, and snatching up little Herbert, whom the jingle of his spurs had awakened, he began tossing him in the air, laughing and imitating the crowing of a cock so admirably that the little fellow's attention was instantly caught, and he desisted from his evident opening towards a good cry. In a few moments Vivian was answering to its tiny babblings, as if they thoroughly understood one another, with the child on his knee—snatching intervals to explain to my mother that his regiment was to embark on the following day, and that as she had expressed a wish to see him in his uniform, he had ridden over from Ap Howel in it.

"So now you will be able," he said to her, but looking at me, "to form a pretty exact idea of how I shall look when I am lying with my feet to the foe—if that is to be my fate—or

when I am holding a durbar to receive the submission of emirs and soldans, out of number, was a general and a conqueror—both which I intend to be, or ever I return to the shadow of Snowdon! Sha'n't I look a plain fellow, Mrs. Luxmoor, among robes of cloth of gold and diamonded turbans?"

"Your sword, which I take it for granted will be naked, Brennus-like, in your hand, will diffuse sufficient lustre around you," was her reply.

"I wonder how I shall find *you* all when I return?" Vivian said, fixing, what seemed to me, a strangely inquiet, piercing—even menacing gaze on Sophia!

"You will have to seek *me* in Pomeroy vaults, I fear, Vivian!" said my mother.

"But I shall not look for you there!" he answered, with an intensely compassionate and regretful look. "I shall look upwards!—and if I do not see you then, it will be because we are all very short-sighted heavenward! And you, Mrs. Pomeroy! (he did not seem to dislike so much to call me by that name) where shall you be?"

"At the gate of my house, wherever it may be, to welcome home the kindest and most

generous of friends—and so will Scarlatt!" I said, with all the warmth of the sincere gratitude I felt towards this disinterested and energetic young ally.

His brow brightened at the first part of this speech—darkened at its close. There was a remarkable and emphatic pause in the conversation which Sophia broke, rather startlingly, by observing, "I am afraid *we* shall not be at Llanhowel, Sir Vivian!" But no comment was made, and after a time the dialogue took a more general turn. The particulars of Vivian's intended departure and voyage formed the principal subject, and I remember he dilated with satisfaction on the probabilities of a speedy breaking-out of hostilities in India, and the chances of his regiment being speedily engaged in active service.

The visit appeared to us all to be cut abruptly short. A distant sound of shouting came to our ears, which Sophia quietly observed she supposed announced the return of Lord Mauleverer and the successful candidate through our neighbouring village—where, however, they were expected to receive congratulations and reply to a speech over the broaching of a monster bee-

barrel. And he arose abruptly. "I left my horse with a ragged urchin of seven only, at the forest entrance of the park," he said, rather hurriedly. "It is a full-blooded, wild creature —and the noise will startle it. I must be gone!"

My mother was much surprised. "You will surely stay and see Lord Mauleverer and congratulate Mr. Su—Mr. Pomeroy?"

"No, Lady Mauleverer!" he replied, with a tart smile; "don't you know I am an anti-corn-law man? and besides, I take part with poor old Suett in the affair, and can't think his son —although he *is* your son-in-law!—at all right, in flinging him from the saddle to mount in his place! I cannot congratulate *Mr. Pomeroy* sincerely—so I won't at all! But as I am a knight going to win my spurs, I ought to be escorted towards the lists by the fair! Will you not accompany me a few steps to my steed, ladies?"

Sophia expressed her acquiescence at once; and struck with Ap Howel's air of calm irritation, which I had seen break out so formidably on a previous occasion, I thought it desirable to assent to the proposed movement. I was

besides, assailed with the conviction that t
was something of mysterious significance in
Vivian's manner, as if he had a communica
of an unusual nature to make to me.

He took an affectionate farewell of my mo
—on her part it was even a solemn one—
she gave him her blessing as to a son abo
depart to scenes of danger, and whom she
never likely to see again. He kissed
Herbert, once more fallen asleep, and sl
Gelert's huge paws, placidly resigned to hi
and we three left the apartment.

Sophia also seemed to think that Sir Vi
wished to speak privately with me. She
not accept the offer of his other arm, afte
had strolled out into the park. She made s
pretence to linger behind—her boot lace c
unknotted !—and allowed us to gain consi
ably in advance.

Ap Howel walked fast, as if proud to s
with what a firm, military tread he could
advance. But when, missing her, he glan
back, he muttered to himself "I thought s
in a sarcastic and scornful tone.

I soon found that my surmises were cor
With the directness that was part of his cha

ter, Vivian told me had not wished to wait my father's arrival, lest he should be forced on an explanation he did not desire to make. And producing a note in Lord Mauleverer's handwriting, I found, to my very great chagrin, and even shame, I must confess, that my husband had shown so little sense of the gratitude we both owed Sir Vivian, as to have communicated to my father the fact that although present, and assisting even officiously as a witness, to our first marriage at the Kerig y Drudion, the youth was then and all along aware of my identity! And my father stated that Scarlatt named *Mrs. Lazmoor* as his authority, she having from my very first arrival at Plas Newydd taken Sir Vivian, and Sir Vivian alone, into her confidence! And Scarlatt proved his assertion by the fact, that it was he who secretly posted her letter to Lord Mauleverer abroad, and throughout was the sole person intrusted in any way in the affair.

On acquiring this information, it appeared, my father had written to Sir Vivian for an explanation, professing himself utterly unable to devise one for himself, but declaring that, until the matter was cleared up, he could not see him

again on the terms of friendship that ha
hitherto existed between them. Adding th
reflection, which among any other race and cla
of men, would have been an absurdity almo
amounting to insanity—Did he think thus t
revenge the indignity an ancestor of the Pomero
had inflicted on an Ap Howel, already so amp
retaliated!—by extinguishing the line of Maul
verer in a plebeian one so distasteful to himse
as that of the Suetts!

"So I take this epistle as a sentence of pe
petual exclusion from Mauleverer!—for how ca
I tell your father the real reasons of my co
duct—so little, as it seems, he has yet forgiv
your husband! Can I say to him the truth
Dare I even repeat it now to yourself, M
Pomeroy?—But as it is probably for the la
time we shall speak together, I may reitera
that it was my sincere opinion—I laboured unc
the delusion, you will think!—that there was
conspiracy to secure you as a prey among th
Suetts, and I thought it very possible—No!
will not pursue the subject, since it seems
distress you so much!—But, at all events, I a
aware that if Lord Mauleverer knew I ha
assisted at your wild nuptials—had even in

peratively required them to take place—with the means of prevention in my hands, even at the sacrifice of the man's life who had ensnared you —Indeed to this hour I marvel how I controlled the dreadful impulse rising in my heart!—Yet what could it have availed since you loved him! —'with your whole heart! with your whole soul!'—annihilating words, that are as it were burned into my own!—Pardon me, Mrs. Pomeroy! I am aware these are not expressions I should use to you—or that you should hear from me! But I have an excuse to plead—I go, sincerely proposing to *return no more!* But do you not now think it is as well I should depart without seeing Mr. Scarlatt Suett—Mr. Pomeroy—your *husband*, Hugh-Helena!—again?"

I was a good deal confused—but I answered in the affirmative to this query without hesitation! What struck me, however—I cannot say most painfully, but most surprisingly, in the revelation, was the fact that Scarlatt assigned Mrs. Luxmoor as his authority in the truly unkind and ungrateful statements made to my father. "It is impossible!" I could not help involuntarily exclaiming. "Scarlatt has never had an opportunity to acquire this information

from Mrs. Luxmoor, either at home or abr since our marriage! Let us question her self!—It is impossible."

"She is lagging a good way in the re said Vivian, pausing and flashing his keen br eyes in the direction of Sophia's distant fig "Innocent, harmless soul! she is stopping admire the lambkins sporting among the but cups!—If buttercups were sovereigns, wha Proserpine amid the fields of Enna she we have in her to gather them! Yet I th the King of Tartarus himself should hesit before he took possession of such a prize!" A he laughed with his clear, bright, ringing— yet melancholy laugh—very briefly, and with effect about the reverse of mirthful upon The scorn and incredulity mingled in it besi annoyed me.

"You ought to be the last to rail so bitt against Mrs. Luxmoor, Sir Vivian!" I s "She is always chaunting your praises, and citing your good and generous actions!—till is almost tired of hearing them!"

"Is she?—thank her!—I am not much pedant, Mrs. Pomeroy, but I think I may qu to you in plain English, *that I dread the*

scendants of Danaus even bearing rich gifts!" Vivian replied, still laughingly; but his tone changed to one of the utmost earnestness and seriousness, as he added, "I intended in reality to have given you a warning on the subject of that kind friend of yours, Mrs. Pomeroy! Only I am like that raving girl of Troy, whose prophecies were always disbelieved—and always fulfilled! Yet take some heed of what I say! Don't have Sophia Sutcliffe—Luxmoor that is! ——too much about you. I am sure she is not a good woman, say what she will!—appear regularly in her pew on Sundays as she may! Just you believe me for once, Hugh-Helena! without waiting for anything so deplorable as proofs would be in this case! I tell you, Sophia Luxmoor—Sophy, as I, too, call her now again!—is too talented, too discontented, too unprincipled, too unfortunate—not to desire to change her condition at the expense of any one, of any right, of any duty!—Beware of her!"

"How barbarously, how cruelly unjust you are, Sir Vivian!—when you must have witnessed ——what every one witnesses—with what unfailing patience and submission she drains her bitter

cup!—endures all the infidelity and brutality o the wretch her husband!"

"That's the very reason I am so afraid o her!—She *crouches* to *spring*. Hers is th calm of the boa constrictor, wreathed in his coil awaiting the tramp of the horse or of the bullo near his springs. The bullock she has alrea in Squire Gawker!—but she despises him t much to compromise herself with him! A besides he is poor—and the poor, I think, w always be safe from our friend, Sophy! I believe," he added, laughing again in that stran nerve-tingling way of his, "poverty is my o chief protection against her sorceries! If e I am rich, I shall take good care to keep out her company!—why, Hugh-Helena! you do know—she is the very kind of woman most m prefer!—for most men are mere sensualists w regard to women—and though Sophia has good deal of brain, too, she knows how to h it, and appear at pleasure the delightful fool like you all best to be!"

"I wonder—I do wonder—Sir Vivian, y can take delight in annoying me with th causeless insinuations!" I said, and tears, know, sprang to my eyes. "But," I added, w

vehemence, "do not carry away with you the notion that I intend to add the withdrawal of my friendship to poor Sophia's calamities! I know it would be one to her!—and I am almost certain some catastrophe is at hand in her relations with Luxmoor—and where then will she find refuge but with me?"

"Then, if you give it her, think you hear Ensign Cassandra repeating his warning again and again from over the Indian Seas!" returned Vivian, with singular earnestness. "I should not like to be in the way of her recoil, I can tell you, when once that explosion—which I foresee, also—takes place! Oh, Sophia is too young—too fraught with ardent passions—too richly endowed with powers of the mind—to take to the life of calm delights and sisterly communion you doubtless image for yourself with her! Don't fancy she will or can be take herself to a cool retirement in a grotto, after having lived in a furnace with Luxmoor! And she is of the kind of women who take their vengeance on the society that has trampled and ill-used them! And, above all, she is too proud to *forgive a benefit!* Confer none on her, then. But I know I am giving words to the winds. What must be, will be! *O beth y*

wnaf fi! How often shall I think I hear thos anguished words over the bitter waves, in vain!

As he uttered this vaticination in tones of in expressible mournfulness and tenderness, Sophi observing we had stopped for her, rejoined u "I thought you might have some private com munication to make to Mrs. Pomeroy, on mat ters of business: do I interrupt?" she th observed, with perfect simplicity of look a tone. "Pardon me, Sir Vivian; Mrs. Pome has told me with what magnanimous generos you have behaved throughout these late affair

"Nay, now, Sophy; Mrs. Pomeroy ne made use of any such fine phrase. She incapable of it!" Vivian replied; but, ne theless, his pale cheek flamed joyfully at words. "Well, if it be so—if Mrs Pome thinks she owes me any thanks—I have gai the only recompense that I value, in hu gift! Peerages and stars are nothing to compared! Nay, they do not enter at all i my ambition. I want to be heard of renown; to do some famous thing in the wo —perhaps the world itself some great go and then—and then—to die regretted by th women!" he concluded, laughing again, but a

the same time bursting into a shower of tears: indeed he wept, and sobbed, and laughed together for several minutes, almost like a young girl in an hysterical paroxysm. I'm sure Sophia and I joined him in the demonstration, hardly knowing why! The poor youth was, however, infinitely ashamed of the exhibition of what he doubtless considered an unmanly weakness; and I saw him searching for a handkerchief in his breast and coat pockets, to remove the hot blotches from his cheeks—seemingly in vain. I handed him my own, therefore, at last; which he received with a kind of avidity, and hid his face in it for some moments, while he yielded to an irresistible climax of nervous sensibility.

He regained the mastery of himself, however, in a short interval, and his laughing causticity and frankness of expression. For putting the bedewed handkerchief in his breast, he said, "I will wear it as an amulet. It was not *wrought by an Egyptian, Sophy!*" he added, with peculiar meaning—alluding, no doubt, to the handkerchief of Desdemona—"so there is no harm in my taking it, you know! If I am shot, Mrs. Pomeroy, you may depend it will be in the

breast; and I will then certainly order them to bring you your handkerchief home again, as a token that I thought of you as long as I could think at all! That is, supposing I have the power of speech; if not, you will make allowances, when you see my name in the black list! But perhaps they will try and persuade you—because you are a Suett-Pomeroy now!—that you ought to pray for such an event—for a Sikh scimetar to send my head dancing, before I am twenty-one! Well! perhaps it would be as well for myself also! I shall take no pains to keep out of the way of either steel or lead. But here is my war-steed, Rhaiadr Dhu! What do you think of him?"

"That I envy you your ride upon him, in the midst of the thunder of battle, over a field of carnage and death, into the heart of a thousand spears!" Sophia replied, with a fierce flashing energy I had never before discerned in her.

"Poor woman! and you can do nothing but sit at home, and write pretty nonsense with a parrot-quill!" said Ap Howel; adding, in softened tones, "Well, poor Sophy! after all, your's is a very hard fate! But do be a good girl! *Don't*

hurt anything I am fond of, dear, till I come back again; and, upon my soul! I will make you so well off then, that you shall not have necessity to plead for any harmful doings afterwards."

"Do not come home sick of battles, and anxious to change your red coat for a black one; and I owe enough already to your liberality, Sir Vivian!" Sophia replied, and in a really moved tone.

"You don't suppose the Reverend Carolus would consider himself bound by an agreement which could not be enforced—Eh, Sophy?" returned Vivian, evidently amused at the idea; and by this time we were all standing by the beautiful black charger the young officer had devoted a considerable portion of his then scanty savings to purchase. He turned now to bid me farewell, and while Sophia, quietly drawing off her glove, averted her head in patting the glossy arched neck of the steed—I know not any reason why I should conceal the fact—Vivian, gently drawing me by the hand I had given towards him, for the first time in his life, touched his lips to mine!—quivering, indeed, with emo-

tion in all their fibres, but with a kiss wh evanescent tenderness spoke only of an etc and hopeless farewell!

He meant this certainly himself. "I give—for I shall never even hear of again, Hugh-Helena! if I can help it," he s as he sprang with remarkable agility and g on his steed, without the aid of the stirr "I shall have no correspondents left in Engl now, excepting my lawyers; and I shall trou them as seldom as I can. But God bless y happen what may to me, and always!—W Sophia, and have I omitted to say farewel you while I was on terra firma?"

"I can shake hands with you on horseb Sir Vivian. It is not the first time that have been on *cavalier* terms!" said Sop smilingly; and it needed a thorough knowle of her character and feelings to understand h deeply wounded she was by this neglect. A Ap Howel shook her hand in a careless oblivious sort of way, until suddenly, as startled into recollection, he stooped and g her quite a country sweetheart's smack of a on both cheeks, exclaiming, "There! that

may tell no tales!" and setting his horse into a fierce curvet with a touch of his spur, and giving me a glance so full of an inexpressible chaos of emotions that I was in a manner struck silent, he waved his hand and disappeared as if shot from sight, on his swift steed's forward dash!

"I am glad he is gone, too! What a curious youth he is! Quite a puzzle in all he says or does!" said Sophia, in her usual tone, almost immediately after, while I remained gazing transfixed. "What can he mean by all these strange warnings and recommendations of his?" And she added, in a deep thoughtful tone, these words—words that dwelt long upon my memory. "He is really, at times, the kind of man that one would *like to kill!* Yet, happy, happy were the woman who could merit and obtain the love of a heart like that!—What a soul of honour and chivalrous sentiment dwells in that young breast! With him love would indeed be an affair of the *heart!*—With almost all other men, and many women, too, it is as our old sentimental friend, Madame Le Crampon, might well say—*tout autre!*"

I had determined not to mention the affi of Lord Mauleverer's letter to any one else; b from Sophia I thought I had a right to dema and receive explanations. I did not stop consider that a confidential communicati between Vivian and myself had not been all calculated on by my husband!

Sophia gave one, however, that seemed qui satisfactory. "Luxmoor must have been t reporter!" she said, without thinking it nece sary, as it seemed, to deny for herself. ' think he often listens craftily about the hou when I have visitors, and Sir Vivian call on me one day last week and—among oth matters—we spoke of the Plas Newy affair, and the aid he had afforded me—so u lessly—in keeping the secret from t Suetts!"

"A week ago! Has he been so long at Howel?"

"Yes, a whole week: but this affair has doubt hindered him from visiting at Maulever and I must say—were it of any other man th your husband, my dear friend!—it is the sha biest, poorest return for almost unequall

generosity and kindness, *not* on record in the annals of social man !"

I felt that it was as she had said. Yet I could not patiently bear so stinging a reflection on my still beloved husband, and I answered Sophia with a haughtiness of reproof she had never yet experienced from my lips. It silenced her—and we parted with very unusual mutual coldness and reserve that night.

CHAPTER VIII.

STRANGE BUT TRUE!

SOPHIA's misfortunes were, however, destined to retrieve for her speedity all my attachment and sympathy.

A messenger arrived at Mauleverer late one evening with really fearful tidings from Llan-howel! It was a poor old man, much attached to Mrs. Luxmoor, who had retained him as sexton in her husband's parish, in spite of his wish to put a drunken vagabond, with whom he made acquaintance in a tap house, in his place. And this man brought a message from her, at considerable rish to himself personally, imdloring assistance to rescue her husband from the fury of his own parishioners!

ared he had been detected in a most
i series of outrages on several of the
s in the school she had organized; and
of one of the maltreated children had
whole village in a determination to
r unworthy pastor out of it! But
to the report, Luxmoor had barricaded
h his wife and two female servants in
ige, and being well armed with a gun
stols, which he ordered the women,
at of their own lives, to keep con-
ded, swore he would there maintain
ainst them all! As the wretch was
tly desperate, and, as usual, under the
f intoxicating liquors, with which he
o ply himself, while the villagers were
st frenzied state of exasperation, the
ful mischiefs were to be apprehended,
ne authoritative interference took

Sophia who secretly despatched the
ntreat me to induce either my father
—who were both in the commission
:—to hasten with such assistance as
hand to quell the disturbance, and
noor from the fury of the mob!

Not at all to my satisfaction, however convincing a proof that he had not feigned his total change of feeling towards Sophia, Scarlatt, to whom I hastened at once with this disastrous intelligence, received it with the utmost coolness and indifference! "I don't believe two words of it—women so exaggerate! Or if there is a row, it is all Mrs. Luxmoor's *insane jealousy* and persecution of her husband have brought it about! He has himself told me how frantically she goes on about him—to *cover her own* doings!—a thousand times! To interfere would only be to countenance her absurdities! And, besides, if Luxmoor is really guilty of such detestable misconduct, I renounce him altogether; and he may get out of his scrape as he has got into it!"

My father had been quietly listening with a newspaper in his hand, but he now started up with very unusual suddenness and vivacity. "But Mrs. Luxmoor! what will become of the poor woman herself!" he exclaimed. "I care very little for her husband's fate—in fact, if I can ascertain any truth in these accusations, I will send him to jail as I would the commonest and vilest of rogues and vagabonds charged with

the like offence! But I cannot suffer so *amiable and accomplished* a woman—and a friend of my daughter's!—to be placed in such jeopardy, by so infamous a scoundrel's conduct, for one moment! I shall go to Llanhowel at once—and all the men about the place that can find horses will accompany me! You can stay, Mr. Pomeroy, of course, if you don't think *your friend's* carcass worth the trouble of a gallop to rescue! And I confess I am myself a good deal of that opinion—but *people of my name* have not hitherto shown themselves so slack to assist their friends in danger!"

And he strode out of the room with as towering a step as any of his Norman ancestors might have gone forth to battle, in panoply of proof.

Scarlatt nevertheless made no attempt to follow. He turned to me with an angry and flushed countenance.

"Do you hear that?" he exclaimed, in a vehemently resentful tone. "Don't you see it is as I have long been hinting to you, only you will understand nothing that is not stuck up on the wall in letters a yard long! The old fool is fairly besotted with her! and, as usual, the first use she makes of her influence is to set people

against me! I have noticed that from the very instant she began to gain a footing here, your father began to think less and less of me!—until now, I believe, he fairly hates me again—and wants me to go and expose my life against a madman like Luxmoor! for the sake of a creature who, I know, has made up her mind to be the ruin of me!"

I was offended for several reasons—some of which I dared not present to myself in any tangible form—with this speech. It was very rarely that Scarlatt indulged his temper with such viperous outbreaks: they stung the more.

"So you call my father a fool, sir! And are *you* really of opinion that only a *fool* could take particular interest in Sophia?" I answered, too tartly, certainly. "But as to saying that she always uses her influence against you, I am sure her praises of you when I first knew you—were—must have been—frightfully exaggerated, quite the other way!"

"That is to be seen yet, Mrs. Pomeroy! I shall be happy to have your opinion, a little less prematurely, the day after I make my maiden speech in parliament!" replied Scarlatt, with that smile of his of other days—full, to say the

an excessive self-appreciation. "But,
ay, Mrs. Luxmoor *is* a woman of
some women have not even the talent
alent where it is most obvious! and
ıe reason why I dread her so much!
reasonable men—always dread women
! Poor Luxmoor had a good saying
: Knowledge is power, *and power is*
in a woman's hands! I am quite sure
·ying to set Lord Mauleverer against
nly the other day, when he insisted so
on escorting her part of the way home
ɔwel, and she would walk, though you
u had offered her a carriage—I saw
ghing quite heartily as they went—your
ıghing, who hardly ever laughs! And
passed me—I happened to be going
› other side of one of the hedges—I
r say to his lordship: "I am no great
ɔf those large, haunchy figures myself:
ind me too much of *state footmen out*
!"

did you suppose such an observation
ɔly to yourself?"

is capable of any thing! and I know
›s me. It could not otherwise be—"

but Scarlatt, suddenly interrupting hir added, "I am quite sure she has taken Mauleverer in tow out of pure hatred agains For she hates you too, Hugh-Helena! you depend upon it—Hugh-Helena! I wonder the deuce they came to think of giving you an awkward double name!—as if you were a man and a woman!—which I verily b your friend, Sophia, is—she knows so well both sides are at!"

"What, in heaven's name, are you tal about, Mr. Pomeroy? And what '*could otherwise be?*'" I exclaimed, in amazemei

"Pooh, pooh, and bah, bah!" replied husband, insultingly enough: "as a wom this world, you must know very well wh mean! you must have observed how artfull is creeping up your father's sleeve! P tight-fitting one at the wrists as it is! D you notice, last visit but one, how she p about the siege Mauleverer sustained ag Cromwell, as if she had been present at it am sure you pricked your own ears high en too, when his lordship asked her to show the spot where the first Ap Howel Mauleverer that had been friends for cent

met with their tenantry to go to Worcester with Charles II.! She knows our whole genealogy better than we do ourselves—I mean the Pomeroy genealogy, of course—though I have studied it night and day for the heralds' people, when they were making me one! And haven't you noticed she shows off chiefly to his lordship —when I am not there? Didn't I hear her the other day in the cedar drawing-room, singing what she persuades you all is one of her own songs and musical composition, when she knew Lord Mauleverer was sitting listening, with the library doors open, with all his might?"

I had noticed that Sophia rarely "showed off" before my husband. But I did not think it so very singular. "You always behave so churlishly to Mrs. Luxmoor!—depreciate everything she does so much!" I observed.

"Well, *he* don't—Lord Mauleverer don't—and I can tell you he has gone now at some risk to interfere in Luxmoor's affairs—for Luxmoor already suspects something too!"

I lost patience. "What, in the name of everything absurd, am I to understand from all this, Scarlatt? that you suspect my father—my friend—of being capable—what *do* you mean?"

"Don't go into hysterics, and I'll tell you plainly enough! Sophia *knows I despise* her, and is determined on revenge!—and if her husband is so much disliked by her as you seem to say, she will do anything to get rid of him—and the only way for that, is to give him a chance of making money by getting rid of her! I know that of old! In plain English, I suspect her of a design to entrap your father! Luxmoor has warned me of it repeatedly, before now, in the most friendly manner—though it is against his own interests!—for of course immense damages could be got out of Lord Mauleverer! But, after all, poor fellow! I believe he is very fond of her—terribly jealous of other people!—though he is not able quite to behave himself with regard to the sex in general!"

"Poor fellow!" I repeated, mockingly. "But if you men extend to one another so much kind forbearance in judgment, I think you might display ever so little towards a persecuted, ill-used, shamefully-betrayed creature like Sophia. And allow me, in addition, to tell you, Mr. Pomeroy, that you have quite mistaken my father's character, who, whatever his other faults towards

my mother, has never shown himself an unfaithful husband to her. And to prove that my confidence in Sophia is sincere, I shall this very moment dispatch the only man we have left in the castle—my mother's page—excepting yourself, of course—with my most earnest request to her to make Mauleverer her home and asylum as long as ever she pleases!"

I believe it was my first decided contradiction to anything my husband chose to expect. But I was excessively irritated.

"Do so, and ruin us all! She will have Lord Mauleverer and myself by the ears before she has been a month in the castle!"

I was too much shocked and disgusted with what at the same time I considered to be the outrageously absurd suspicions and suggestions of my husband, to hesitate at all in the execution of the purpose I announced. Yet I own these reiterated warnings, from quarters so opposed, began to produce some effect upon me. After I had despatched my messenger, I even began to contemplate the possibility of Sophia's arrival and sojourn at Mauleverer, with a species of dismay. And I confess it was not without relief that I found my father returned to the castle—

after a protracted stay of some hours at Llanhowel—alone.

The villagers, it appeared, had not ventured to carry out their first resolution, deterred by the furious menaces and mortal weapons of their vile pastor. He had accordingly sustained his siege with little damage, excepting that all the windows of the parsonage were broken by two women who were suspected to have peculiar reasons for despising danger in their exasperation—until my father arrived with his little improvisated troop of cavalry. And only just in time to rescue Sophia from really the greatest personal peril! Luxmoor had by some means ascertained that she had communicated out of doors, and concluding at once—naturally enough—that she had sent to summon assistance against him—openly avowed his determination to take her life! She had scarcely time to flee and bar herself in one of the garrets—the door of which the wretch, insane with drunkenness, and consciousness of total ruin and disgrace, was essaying to batter down, like a furious bull, by driving his short but massive body against it: the servant girls were screaming for assistance without being able to induce the panic-stricken rustics to afford any when Lord Mauleverer arrived.

My father lost not a moment in forcing open the doors, and he himself headed the rescuing party up the stairs. Luckily Luxmoor. had laid aside his firearms, conceiving an axe he had taken from the coal-cellar, better adapted for his murderous purposes. He was therefore secured without so much difficulty as might have been apprehended, being, in fact, so much inebriated, as to fall headlong down the stairs in a rush to regain his weapons, supposing the onslaught to be from the villagers. But he had still the cunning, on recognising Lord Mauleverer, to assume at once all the style of an injured man; and declare that his wife's jealousy had provoked the tumult quite causelessly! He had the impudence to appeal to Lord Mauleverer himself as a friend, who must be aware that it was quite impossible for him, a man of education and character, to have disgraced his cloth in the manner imputed to him!

Sophia, poor soul! was found crawling, at the most imminent risk of her life, out on the parapet of the garret window—with the intention, as she told my father, rather of precipitating herself into the churchyard below, than of falling into the power of the brutish madman raging at the door

of her place of refuge. I have seldom seen my father more moved than he was in describing the excess of her gratitude to him for his timely interposition! And it appeared that her patience was at last fairly worn out! Luxmoor had indeed, still the confidence to appeal to her to bear witness that she did not believe in the accusations of his enemies—that she was herself present in the schoolroom during the whole period of his alleged misconduct! But very properly she turned from him in utter disdain and repudiation! And then it appeared he had the insane malignity to accuse her of heading a conspiracy formed for the express purpose of ousting him from his parish, and bringing in a young curate—whom he declared the patron—another of her favourites!—Sir Vivian Ap Howel, he previously endeavoured to introduce. Nor did he hesitate to accuse her of the most criminal motives and objects in the organization of this design! Even of having purposely provided him with extra means of intoxication, by leaving the keys of her cellars in his way!

Lord Mauleverer, disgusted beyond measure directed the depositions of the witnesses to be made before him at once, and in spite of all

Luxmoor's clamour of a conspiracy—that his wife was skilled in conspiracies!—words which, however, my father repeated before both Scarlatt and myself, with bitter emphasis!—he consigned him at once to jail on the dreadful and infamous charges fully substantiated against him!

But when this vile man was taken off, and Lord Mauleverer proffered an asylum in his house to the injured wife, backed by my mother's and my own earnest invitation, which arrived in the interim—she gratefully but most decisively declined it! She could not endure, she said, to remain in that part of the country during the exposures that must follow on the detection of her miserable husband. They would involve a woful display of indecision and almost criminal sufferance on her own part. The forfeiture of her husband's position was inevitable—but she did not imagine herself altogether destitute of the means of living apart from him, on her own industry. She proposed to go at once to London . . . existence would be insupportable to her, if she remained where she was! And my father briefly stated that he was convinced by her arguments, and sorry that he could not prevail upon her to accept any pecuniary assistance to

enable her to proceed to the metropolis. But, he added,—still more carelessly—indignant at the dreadful maltreatment the unfortunate woman had sustained from her villanous husband, he had offered her the aid of his purse and influence in any measures of redress or liberation she might find it possible to adopt, on consultation with the most eminent London practitioners of the law. *And this she had accepted.*

But this indifferent tone deceived not Scarlatt —if, indeed, it was intended to deceive any one. No sooner were we alone, than he burst out, "I see it all now, I see it all now, Hugh-Helena! The plan is to get a divorce from Luxmoor, and then for her to *marry your father!*"

I stared at him in complete bewilderment. "Are you mad?" I asked at last. "Do you not know that my father is a husband already! —the husband of my mother!—if even Mrs. Luxmoor were set free to marry any one this hour!"

"But you must know your mother's life is not worth six months' purchase; and if Luxmoor has behaved himself so atrociously, I suppose he comes pretty well up to the standard

at which they grant divorces to women! And though it might be a difficult matter, certainly; yet if Sophia is thoroughly well backed with money and influence, she may obtain a divorce, I say! I know they have granted women divorces sometimes; and I dare say it is quite as much their own stupid endurance, and clinging to fellows that serve them so desperately bad, as the difficulty and the expense, that have made them so few hitherto."

"Heaven prosper her in the attempt to divorce herself from the abomination of such a monster's association!"

"But don't you see what will happen then? She is quite a young woman still. She will have children—male heirs both to the title and the estates! Luxmoor himself has confessed to me, that but for that row about the Cambridge woman he should have been a father; though he said he detests children and their squalling, and did not regret it one bit! It was when I showed him little Herbert first!"

"Unnatural ruffian!"

"You had much better join with me against her than against *him*," said Scarlatt. "But if the worst comes to the worst," he added, venge-

fully, "I know a trick to stop her. I shall let Lord Mauleverer know what a life she led at Cambridge, and all her inveigling artifices to me!"

"Cambridge!" I exclaimed.

"Yes. Luxmoor can tell a pretty story of her doings there! I suppose she has persuaded you she left him because she was ill-treated by him there—not because she misbehaved herself so shockingly, that he turned her out of doors?"

"Do you think I would believe one word so depraved a wretch can say against the woman he has so basely injured—whose fair fame itself he now wishes to lie away? Who could believe so atrocious a calumniator, when, by his own showing, were all that he alleges true, he must be the most infamous of men to have taken her back again!"

"Oh, Luxmoor's faults have been caused altogether by *his domestic unhappiness!* And the poor fellow is not to blame for having taken her back! The truth is, he dotes upon her, and forgave her everything. He could not live without her! She is a very fascinating woman —you must see that. But no sooner was she settled comfortably at Llanhowel, than she took

to all her old courses again! You should hear what Squire Gawker says of her, now she has cut him for her speculation on your father!"

"Neither would I credit what a disappointed fool and knave, like that fellow, may give out! But you have assuredly as rapid an imagination as it is at all necessary for a solid statesman to possess, Scarlatt!—since you have divorced Mrs. Luxmoor—consigned my mother to the grave—and married her to my father, the proudest of aristocrats—a woman without station, birth, wealth—all in a breath!"

"Well, but I'll take care they shall not find the divorce so easy! As for your mother, even if she were quite well, I confess I should not like mine to be a life in the way of Sophia's attainment of a coronet!"

"What a most dreadful idea! What has she done to merit suspicions too horrible to be formed even of the most notorious criminals?"

"Is she not separated from her husband, or will soon be?"

"Has she not cause?"

"That don't matter. Every woman who leaves her husband must be a bad one!"

suading you your husband is not fit to
guide and adviser in everything? But
are so determined to side with her—all c
he added, after some reflection, and
visible reanimation of countenance, "
better really have her at Mauleverer!
be less dangerous here than at a distan
yourself, and try to prevail upon her to c

I was surprised at this sudden chang
husband's humour; but it coincided s
with my own wishes, and the really utt
dulity I felt in Scarlatt's insinuations,
agreed to the proposal at once.

Accordingly, on the following mor
early as I could manage it, I drove
Llanhowel. But the bird was flown,
stead of my friend, I found a letter f

CHAPTER IX.

EX-TENEBRIS.

"DEAREST Mrs. Pomeroy!" this letter ran: "aware of the generous goodness of your heart—dreading your influence over my own—I have not dared to await the entreaties with which I know you will endeavour to prevail upon me to accept the kind proffer I have already declined.

"I have several reasons for this—but will not one suffice when I tell you I am convinced, in my own heart, that I take misfortune with me wherever I go? You have all been too good to me at Mauleverer—your saintly mother, your dear self, your truly noble father—noblest even in my heraldry, which is not that of Garter King at Arms!—for me to hazard bringing with me

there the sorrowful company I am assured will henceforth dog my steps through existence!

"Do not ask me the reasons of these convictions; they are rather instincts, sure presentiments! The rest of my days are doomed to struggle and misery: let me not bring upon others dear to me what I can alone suffer—perhaps alone ought to suffer! It is, I repeat, a crime to have loved such a man! And did not that honestest and most generous of youths bid me at parting spare what was most dear to him? Who is dearer than you are!—than your sweet children are—than all your house have ever been?

"Moreover, I do not say it by way of reproach, but Lord Mauleverer has stated to me what Mr. Pomeroy, your husband, was pleased to say and do on the occasion of my application for assistance on his friend's behalf. Luxmoor is indeed unworthy of all sympathy and aid—but still, still I cannot make up my heart to become a guest where such maxims of friendship are in vogue. It is not a mere machine of circulation! It would not permit me so calmly to have allowed one whom even I *detested* to be torn to pieces by an infuriate mob!—No more of that.

"It must be admitted, I think, at last—that Luxmoor has a little exceeded even the *just privileges* of his sex. I have never pretended—at least of latter times—to his fidelity! We cannot—we ought not, according to some reasoners — to expect to confine such variety-loving creatures as men in the pales they have themselves made, but so easily vault over—*We* are to be fixed as rocks in constancy to them: for it is only we who can do the harm in families, you know! We alone can taint the 'purity of the domestic hearth'—we alone introduce a 'spurious offspring' into the house! Of course, it is nothing that we are aware the guardian of all these domestic sanctities has just left the arms of a paramour: that children, who have a right to call him sire, but stranger-women mother, dwell under another roof, almost purified by their presence! *We* only can despoil the true heirs of their inheritance! Men cannot! They have it in their power, it is true, to leave not only their own possessions, but ours also, to the children of the strange woman—to the woman herself—whom, by a beautiful provision of nature, they seem always to prefer to 'honest Madam' and her issue!—I have indeed seen with my own eyes

a will in which Luxmoor left all the savings of my care from his prodigality to his goodly brood at the university, which he ever in words has disowned! But what matter facts against established legal fictions?—I admit all these truths. Still, wide as is the latitude men allow to each other, it does really appear that there are limits to it! Luxmoor's infamy is now open and apparent: of a kind that the utmost stretch of indulgence could not, without sharing, pardon! Surely if there be justice for woman against man it cannot be denied me! The bond between us, which God is said to have joined, has become one of pollution and ignominy! Can God sanction these?

"And have I not borne sufficiently with this man—this demon, Hugh-Helena? What you have yourself witnessed is as nothing—a drop from the great ocean—to all I have endured!

"There is scarcely a crime in the decalogue, whose solemn forbiddings it was Luxmoor's duty weekly to give forth, to an insulted congregation perfectly cognisant of his depravity, of which he has not been guilty, or attempted to be guilty! Epicurus's sty never produced a more wallowing sensualist than he! He is notoriously a drunkard, a profligate of the worst order—an adul-

terer! I have lived in constant terror, lest he should profane my roof—almost my very presence—by some enormity! At his pleasure he has treated me with the most contemptuous neglect, or compelled submission to the most degrading and disgusting impulses of his furibund animal nature, excited by drink and constitutional recklessness beyond all restraints! My person even—you have witnessed—has not been sacred from perhaps less unmanly blows and spurns! The vilest abuse language could be cast into, by a ribald blasphemer, skilled in all its abuses, has been heaped upon me! Forbidden to look to religion itself for a consolation—for what hope or meaning could there be to me in a religion that Luxmoor preached?—I have been driven to the verge of perhaps my own eternal condemnation—to the meditation of suicide—by the overwhelming and remediless nature of my wrongs! And shall it be said that my measure is not yet filled up, and that I have no right to demand of divine and human justice redemption from a monster's power like this?

"From the very first what has this husband—if he is still to be called such—been to me? He found me, I will admit, causelessly impatient and discontented with my position in the world—

anxious for higher fortunes in it than I had parently any right to expect; vain, coquet conceited with an air-blown opinion of my claims and advantages. But he had from all that the best of men can pretend to, fro woman whom he makes his wife: a that was more than a passion: a kin tenderness so largely mixed with homage, it seemed rather a kind of adoration! I ha the ignorance of schools about me—and appeared to me a wise man: as if a bad ever was a wise one! I gloried in his abilitie I imagined him more than all you doubtless deem your husband, saving that no illusion c represent him to me under externals so brilli Some phantom is surely permitted to roam world, and present to the eyes of women what is most attractive to each; to lure us to doom! It vanishes, with all its attributes, w we have once surrendered ourselves into the clasp of destiny! I imagined Luxmoor al godlike in intellect! I have awoke, and fo that he is only a profligate college professor!

"Yet, even when I knew how much I been deceived, it cannot be denied that I labo most strenuously to make the best of my unha chance! I continued to love this man whe

could no longer form a delusion in connexion with him—for no other reason, perhaps, than because I *had* loved him! I devoured my heart in silence. I knew his infidelities and tolerated them! And worse than that! you remember how I told about his Cambridge mistress, or rather *mastress*—I think a new word ought to be coined in her favour! But you do not know all that happened there! It is my firm belief Luxmoor would have had me plunge myself in ignominy to assist in his riotous expenses, and leave myself at his mercy to repudiate me when he should think it for his interest or pleasure to select another victim! As for his yet more infamous conduct with the two Wrangham women, how could I avoid being aware of enormities enacted almost beneath my gaze? Yet I exhausted myself in efforts to hide these criminal excesses from the observation of those who ought to have pnnished them! You remember my interview with that poor archdeacon, where I denied all—persuaded him that all those true but anonymous accusations were false! Oh! believe me, it was hard work to go after such a cloven-footed beast (pardon the strong expressions I use—I have no time to choose gentler

ones, even had I still the temper!) and obl
the filthy traces of his passage—som
through the whiteness of my own tra
reputation! Oh, heard you ever of so
husband? He even took a pleasure in thi
soot on his own wife's fair fame! The
the Gawker affair—but I cannot speak o
with any patience! The foolish fellow h
was sufficiently misled by Luxmoor's insinu
as to imagine he might have a prospect o
cess with me! And I own that he avo
feeling for me which, while I repulsed i
the utmost contempt, satisfied me I was n
so old, so ugly, nor so unnoticeable in
sense as my husband's preferences might
induced me to believe. He was a poor v
too, that Gawker! He lent not a hand
attempt to rescue me from that raging
during the whole dreadful scene, all of wh
must have witnessed from his house!
treated any real *man*—such a one, for ex
as young Ap Howel—with a thousand
the disdain—had I preferred to him th
worthy of all mankind—still he would
hazarded life and limb to rescue *any* v
from such danger! But one whom h
loved!—I declare to you your father ap

to me like a veritable knight of the olden chivalry—a St. George, a Bayard—when he hazarded so much—his own life, in fact—to relieve me from my dreadful situation! I feel that I owe Lord Mauleverer gratitude, homage—if I dared say so without fear of being misconstrued—my *deepest love* and veneration to the last hour of my existence!

"Well, you know the result of all my pains—the total failure of all my efforts to cover in this steaming corruption, which has burst itself a way at last, and fills the whole air with its betraying stench! It is impossible that even the mild bishop, and my good friend, the archdeacon, can overlook so public and notorious a scandal. Your noble father himself, so conservative in all his opinions, pronounced, if there were another such priest in the Establishment, it would be necessary to make a new Reformation! Luxmoor will, in all probability, be branded with some infamous punishment, and turned out into the world a beggar and an outcast! And am I, who have not shared his crimes, except by attempting to palliate them, to share this vile wretch's punishment? Or, because I have unwittingly united myself to a

monster, am I to be condemned either to h detested society, or to live a solitary creature i the world, exposed to all the temptations, all th insults that assail women in such a position Until my recent interview with your kind, yo most generous, your *truly noble* father, I ha deemed there was indeed no extrication for me No earthly power, I thought, could free me fro the body of that death! I imagined I was lik the poor wretch in the eastern tale, married in country where it was the custom to inter th living spouse with the dead one! I had hardl ever heard a case of a woman divorcing he husband!—though I had myself known man who would have had the right, and even wh would have had the courage and resolution t exert it, but who still sat on the highway hugging their chains, apparently powerless fo redemption! I had been often assured of th practical indissolubility of marriage, so far a regards women, in all but cases of an infam scarcely to be dreaded! But Lord Mauleverer whose judgment and ripe maturity of wisdo and experience no one can dispute, seems t think that the time has arrived when a litt extension of these rigid rules may be hoped for

Luxmoor has not committed the crime which our wise lawgivers seem to consider the only one that renders a wicked man unfit for the society of the best of women—because I have no sister and no daughter—thanks to his own cruelty for this latter! But surely mine *is* a special case; and, though parliament hitherto has only granted divorces to women three or four times in the course of a century, Lord Mauleverer thinks it is impossible they can refuse a release in this case! His lordship has even most kindly undertaken, if it can be brought to such a stage, to take charge of a bill for my relief in the House of Lords. Moreover, as the expenses will be great, infinitely beyond any resources I can possibly command—with a really unexampled generosity—unexampled but for one exception! your best of fathers has offered to be at the whole cost of the suit in conducting it through the necessary preliminary stages. Upwards of twelve hundred pounds, I am assured, at the very least outlay! What do I not owe to the chivalrous compassion and liberality of this great nobleman, this worthy 'descendant of a hundred bright-branded chevaliers,' as I remember, I think, having once before heard him styled—or

was it yourself, dear Hugh-Helena?—But, of course, I am aware that Lord Mauleverer's princely kindness to me is entirely owing to the friendship he knows his peerless daughter bears me, and the more than maternal affection of her benignant mother!

"It is indeed very much on your dear mother's account that I have resolved to decline your third invitation to Mauleverer. In her failing state of health I would not for the world add the discomfort and harassment, which I shall have to sustain, doubtless, before I can achieve the blessedness of redemption from the *corrupting corruption* I am fastened to! My poor father, whose memory I still revere, thank God!—it is my last hold on anything good!—would leave his nameless grave to visit me with his malediction, if I contributed in anything to the sorrows and sufferings of the dear lady's passage through a world unworthy of her! Besides, my presence in London is absolutely necessary in preparing the pleadings and preliminaries of a decision in my favour in the Ecclesiastical Courts. I think there can be no doubt I shall have one, if there be one spark of justice or of humanity in the breasts of the judges there! which one would

em, framed with the view of exalting
n supremacy over every human right
e! By the by, perhaps my poor
ot so very frivolous in his objections
after all! Perhaps those flowers,
crucifixes, and embroidered copes
e the sanbenitos of the inquisition!
another pressing and predominant
onvey me to London without delay.
my own living. Not a penny for
urpose but the expenses of this suit
e from the generosity even of that
us of men—that natural nobleman
r! I have only seven pounds, thir-
s, and a few halfpence to begin the
But my own wants are very mode-
ave good hope that even the poor
ssess may be turned to account in

friends! You will, perhaps, wonder how. M
have certainly taken unto themselves almost
the lucrative occupations of life—the manufa
ture, the sale of everything. Do they not ev
make *baby-linen* now?—the cure of bodies a
the cure of souls (how they cure them!), alik
But they have not yet taken to themselves t
sole wielding of the goosequill! Of cour
they will not admit much merit in any fema
composition. You know it is an establish
truth that only men can write anything th
requires reach or soar of the mind! Only me
for example, possess that profound knowled
of human nature—(if they consider women pa
of it, what funny things they make of us
their writings! all either simpletons or mo
sters!)—that profound knowledge of huma
nature necessary to the dramatist, or the hist
rian, or the poet in general, or the—this, tha
and the other! Whatever is expansive in inte
lectual vision and power, glorious in imaginatio
subtle in wit, overswaying in eloquence—
admit are theirs! But they have not y
decided that we are absolute idiots, and inc
pable of putting words together in an occasion
ally pleasing and attractive form. I am goin

to try my hand at this art! I shall not starve these three months, at ten shillings a week, even if I fail! But I *will not fail*—as Lady Macbeth observed, in a more perilous emergency! At any rate you shall hear constantly of my progress; and before I look out for Chatterton's apothecary—(but the worthy man must long since have followed his poor customer!)—I will write *you* word! Meanwhile, do not send me a single sous. I will not accept charity, dearest! and when I do, rather from the parish than from Mr. Pomeroy's resources! And you have unhappily—but it is not too late, perhaps, in some way to repair the evil—not secured the right of calling one penny of your own, your own! Do not be concerned for me! London is the best place in the world to be poor in! And in another point we are suited to one another: there are so many miserable people in it, that one more or less is never either counted or missed!

"After all, what has happened may be ALL FOR THE BEST—as the favourite of the man who was my husband, Dr. Pangloss, in Candide, is wont to observe. I don't know that I was made exactly for the frowsy life of a country

parson's spouse. I was beginning to grow very very tired of it! How I used to sit, counting those death's dominoes stuck upright in the churchyard of Llanhowel, musing vainly over a dream I once had—a dream of my girlhood—that I would be the first woman who by sheer force of merit obtained a tomb in Westminster Abbey! A dull and dusty finish, after all! I think I would now rather enjoy myself a little alive! It is certain I was growing too dismal for good at Llanhowel. My thoughts, like an unnatural progeny, had begun to gnaw at the dugs that gave them nutriment: in brief, I imagine I was *going mad!* Not the kind of madness you put in strait waistcoats; but one you can't, and that works very rational-seeming mischief! I tell you, I am better gone: I shall breathe freelier in a great city! The restless friction of an innumerable movement is necessary for my moral well-being, I am persuaded now! Oh, no, my dearest friend! whatever I was made for—and I confess I have very little notion myself what!—I am afraid it was not to pickle walnuts, and praise my daughters to the squire! I wish the country were invaded, and needed a Joan of Arc: you should see if I would

not give it one!—A good deal *cracked*, you must allow, am I not, to prate so?

"I have but little more, I think, to say at present. It would be so superfluous to assure you of my constant and unvarying love and devotion to yourself, and in all that concerns you!—and such assurances come with suspicious fervour from the unfortunate! I know that I can safely commend to you the care of my reputation, should any scandalous tongue assail it in conjunction with these late disastrous events; and as I do not doubt the *malignity of men, and the fidelity of their co-partnery against our sex!* for the purposes of refutation, I release you from your promises of secrecy as to my real condition and treatment at Llanhowel! You may tell to all the world—to all who ask it—that I was beaten more cruelly than a disobedient hound by my 'natural protector!'—disgraced, traduced, betrayed in every possible form! I may even need your kind testimony in the suit I am to prosecute—your evidence of the dreadful maltreatment to which I was subjected! You will gladly afford it me, will you not, dearest of sisters rather than *kindest of friends?*"

There was a postscript to this long epistle, the skilful drift of which I did not at the moment appreciate. It ran thus: "If I had time, I would venture to express a few words of regret that poor Bronwen Suett should remain under the tutelage of Madame Le Crampon! I have some reasons now to think her flirtation with Luxmoor not altogether so platonic as at one time I believed! I have lighted on some epistles when I was packing after his capture—as well as that atrocious will—which seem to me to place the matter out of doubt! You shall yourself judge—if you deem it worth the trouble—when we meet again."

Scarlatt insisted on seeing this letter, and its perusal confirmed him in all his suspicions. The sudden resolution taken—the air of independence and determination with which it was announced—my father's extraordinary interest in the affair—"the cruel way he prejudged poor Luxmoor's case, by refusing bail, which he (Scarlatt) would have been quite ready to give, so convinced was he that it was all a trumpeted-up scandal!"—every word in the letter seemed to confirm his preconceived idea! His comments were of the most exasperated kind! Lord Mauleverer, he was

convinced, and Mrs. Luxmoor, had arrived at some pretty mutual understanding during this long interview at Llanhowel! He had ascertained his lordship and she were shut up together more than two hours, with all the machinery of tears and lamentations in full play—after Luxmoor's committal! But he would take care to spoil her work!—As to her humbug of refusing *charity*—what did she call the large sums he had himself advanced, on various occasions, to her husband? Had she no share in them? How did they live until they got Llanhowel? was I not always asking money for them from him? who paid all the expenses of the trip in Scotland?—He saw through it all. She knew how tired Lord Mauleverer was of the submission and wo-begone resignation of my mother! No doubt she had persuaded him she was just the kind of woman he had been disappointed in obtaining in his first wife! (He spoke of my mother as if she was already dead!) Men had these cheating phantoms to lure them into the commission of matrimony, as well as women, he was sure! On his part, Lord Mauleverer was just the sort of object she had been all her life craving after: a peer, wealthy: one whose pre-

judices it amused her daring and versatile ge to overcome! But—and it was still the bur of Scarlatt's lay—*he would thwart her yet!*

I confess I did not quite like the tone tenor of my epistle, apart from Scarlatt's in pretations. There really pervaded it an air assertion and equality to which I was li accustomed from Sophia! Her expressi breathed such a spirit of restlessness, disconte defiance—I know not what of turbulent a challenging! She had no reason indeed to very content!—but while I thoroughly compr hended, and would have aided, by any mea in my power, her resolution of breaking fro her yokefellow in the galley-chain, I confe I was shocked at Sophia's pretty clearly hinte purpose to form another and immediate connexio as a consequence and aim of her liberation! Th allusion to the "hundred bright-branded chevaliers" recalled the painful circumstances under which the expression was used by young Ap Howel! And though I repudiated the base notion that Sophia could have formed any such projects as those imputed to her, on my father, I so far acted on the supposition, that I was about to destroy her letter when Scarlatt declared that the numer-

ous warm eulogiums it contained on Lord Mauleverer, were inserted with a view to being brought under his observation. But he begged me to keep it rather as evidence, at some future period, of the deceitful plans she had formed, and of her craftiness of nature, which I still refused to credit! Accordingly I put it by in a small inlaid cabinet, where I kept my most valuable writings, without drawing any inference from the particular notice Scarlatt certainly took of the place of deposit.

He lost no time in his projects of counteraction, it must be admitted. The very next day, Madame Le Crampon received information of the imputations against her *caractère* in Sophia's letter, and arrived at Mauleverer, in a state of extraordinary furor, to "demand audience" to vindicate it! I had some curiosity to hear what she could say, and granted what she required. And indeed if I had not been most thoroughly prepossessed in favour of Sophia, and against my informant, the tale she told me of the artifices by which the former had "seduced the affections of that unfortunate man, *le pauvre* Luxmoor," from herself, would have stirred my indignation and even abhor-

rence! Madame le Crampon laboured und the delusion, apparently, that Luxmoor w in reality strongly attached to her, when "t woman, without honour and without pudicity arrived to dispute a heart which was *tout lui* until that disastrous moment! Ne Madame was convinced that the "poor profe seur's" drinking, and consequent misconduct, h altogether arisen from discovering too late wh a loss he had sustained in the change he w cajoled into making! Finally, I gathered in dentally from her incoherent effusions, that s intended to astonish the world, and Luxmo himself, by an unprecedented act of devotion him now, in his "desperation and despair She would "let see, like the children befo Solomon," who had really and truly loved hi —for himself alone! "She who had desert him in chains, in captivity, in a dungeon, or s who"—she left the sentence unfinished. B shortly after I heard she had resigned her situ tion at Plas Newydd, and had gone no o knew whither!

Sophia, however, was better informed. In subsequent letter she wrote me, she said sh ascertained for a fact that Madame le Crampo

had actually betaken herself to console Luxmoor in his imprisonment! "Why not?" she added. "What is more usual than to see phosphor on any putrid body? Madame Le Crampon's 'purple light of love' is even such, and no other; though I dare say she fancies she is giving the 'most noble example of a touching devotion,' in the style of Josephine to Napoleon at Elba, deserted by Marie Louise!"

Scarlatt, who was present at my interview with Madame Le Crampon, took unusual pains, though apparently quite by chance, to communicate even an exaggerated repetition of all the particulars of her statement before Lord Mauleverer. But his lordship's only comment was, turning to me, "I am quite of your girlish opinion now, Hugh-Helena! and your *ex-gouvernante* must be one of the most scandalous and rotten-hearted of Parisiennes!—which is a corruption of some eminence, let me assure you, Mr. Pomeroy! if you have not drawn the conclusion yourself from observation on your foreign travels!"

CHAPTER X.

LITERATURE AND LAW.

SOPHIA'S first letters to me from town really almost dismayed me, from their tone of exuberant —indeed wild and lurid gaiety! It seemed to me too like the play of lightning—flickering with its wings of flame over the sky, but ready to descend, and blast where it touched!—a kind of mirth that not unfrequently covers the deepest anguish of a proud spirit, when it exists in conjunction with constitutional vivacity, and sprightliness of imagination and wit. But I have no doubt she expressed her real sentiments —though at times in a very fantastic, Madge Wildfire style—when she boasted the happiness

e found in her liberation from the society of r dreadful husband, and the carking cares and scontents which had ever accompanied her nnexion with him. The weight of a moun- n, she declared, was taken off her spirits! e had been wont to tremble at every proaching footstep, at the sound of every anger's voice, lest they should bear to her e announcement of some such catastrophe as at which had at last fallen on Luxmoor, rough his own villany! The hours of sus- nse and miserable anticipation she had spent, pecting his often unaccountably delayed re- rn, could not be reckoned, but had long been sping in secret at the most delicate and werful springs in the mechanism of her ing. Now she was freed from all this, she mpared herself to the Ancient Mariner, when e albatross fell from his neck, "like lead into e sea." It was true that her albatross was ill fastened to her neck by a strongly twisted lummet line; but she cherished the most san- uine expectations that a full and perfect release as assured to her as soon as she could get the roper machinery for a severance in action.

She consulted some of the most eminent practitioners of the Arches' Court, to whom Lord Mauleverer had given her a recommendation, immediately on her arrival in London. And these learned personages, after a thorough investigation (so she stated) of the particulars of her case, gave it as their most decided opinion that it was impossible the Ecclesiastical Court, to which she must apply in the first instance, could refuse her the degree of justice it was in its power to concede, namely, a divorce *à mensâ et thoro*, as they called it—from bed and board—on the united accusations of adultery and cruelty, which she was prepared to substantiate against her husband. The Ecclesiastical Courts, true to the traditions of their origin, adhering to the papistical doctrine of the indissolubility of marriage, could grant no more than an unmeaning decree to this effect, which was yet a necessary preliminary to a demand on the legislature for a complete and substantial release—a divorce *à vinculo*. The House of Lords—or rather one of the old formulist law lords of a former generation—had so decreed it; and yet by no means took the Ecclesiastical Court on its word, but tried

s case over again before its own
Sophia's lawyers, however, strongly
ided that no proceedings should be
the case until Luxmoor's trial was
ecision against him, in such a matter,
inal court of justice, being likely to
me of the difficulties in the way of the
her allegations, and to establish the
points of the case in her favour.
ent was, therefore, awaited by Sophia
npatience of hope too atrociously justi-
ugh, perhaps, evincing a degree of
idictiveness I had not hitherto deemed
ngly mild and variable temperament
!

t watched over our correspondence,
nued his suspicious interpretations of
art in it. And, in fact, some circum-
esented themselves in the affair, that
ite easily on my own mind!
lready sent to Sophia a sum of money
mother and myself imagined, in spite
hibition, would be found useful to her
lorn position. But Lord Mauleverer
place a larger one in my hands,
; me to forward it as from myself,

to Mrs. Luxmoor, since she would accept no pecuniary assistance, saving directly in her suit, from him! And he certainly took a very remarkable interest in her letters, of the arrival of which he seemed always aware; and he often requested me to read over to him such parts as I thought would give him the best notion how my "*brilliant friend*, and his own talented protégée"—so he now usually styled Sophia—was getting on in London! He seemed not pleased when I suppressed any portion of these overflows of confidence; though I never complied with Scarlatt's injunctions to omit the frequent and really eloquent and enthusiastic eulogiums of himself, with which Sophia's letters at this period were all aglow. On his part, Lord Mauleverer launched into constant panegyrics of the grace, and wit, and good sense of my correspondent's compositions, and the courage and ability with which she was following out her plans on the scene of action. And Sophia had in reality a peculiar excellence in letter-writing, and could communicate some of the best qualities of her lively, laughing, conversational tone to the flow of her epistolary style. In consequence of all this, Scarlatt would have

it I was merely made the medium of a correspondence between my father and Mrs. Luxmoor, which otherwise they would have been rather at a loss to carry on without exciting observation! But he succeeded only in harassing and irritating me with what I conceived to be the extreme injustice of his suspicions. More especially when he pointed out to me, as a confirmation of his assertions, Sophia's constant and seemingly most affectionate inquiries after my mother's health! I could not believe in the possibility of such unfeeling duplicity and betrayal!

The money I transmitted to Sophia was returned to me, with many thankful acknowledgments, but with an evident determination to refrain from accepting any pecuniary benefit at our hands. Yet the account she gave of the progress of her literary speculations, to which she had now some leisure to devote herself, was anything but encouraging.

It appeared she had a novel already completed when she left Llanhowel, which she considered in a state fit for publication, and she placed her main hopes of procuring herself an independent existence in the success of this work. But now she gave me ludicrous, though in my thought,

at the same time, almost tragically pathetic accounts, of her toils and disasters in the attempt to find a publisher willing to undertake the presentation of this novel to the world. There was really something very affecting, and calculated to inspire compassion and respect of the deepest, in the laughing anguish—the brave bearing-up and undiminished vitality of hope—which pervaded Sophia's narratives of her many mortifying failures among the London publishers. I think, if I remember rightly, this work, which afterwards achieved so signal and permanent a success, was rejected by nearly the whole round of the publishing magnates. Yet she told me the story of each successive discomfiture—described her interviews and ingenious little artifices to obtain attention—in the most amusing manner possible! Sophia had an extraordinarily lively perception of the ludicrous and characteristic: it seemed as if she could penetrate the secret of the most veiled and crafty natures at a glance, and describe them in a word! Her acute perception pierced below every species of pretentious and false external, and struck quite to the core of things, with an intuitive power and infallibility of aim that only belong to a very high order of

le faculty with which I think Sophia was pecu-
ırly endowed—the dramatic. This gave to her
e incalculable advantage, not only of seeing
›m her own points of view, but from those of
the surrounding dramatis personæ, whom her
ntriving and restless genius compelled to accept
rts in that involved drama of real life in which
e was at once the creative spirit and principal
rformer.

I often laughed, while tears came to my eyes,
er these epistles. After all, there was so much
at was magnanimous, self-relying, unconquer-
le, in this phase of Sophia's career, that doubt-
ıs something of the heroic must be admitted
an element in her strangely compounded
ıture! In spite of these multiplied failures,
ver for an instant did it seem to occur to her
at her composition was worthy of its disastrous
rtunes, or that it would not ultimately achieve
triumph! She ascribed them, with unquailing
›od spirits and resolve, to quite apart circum-
ances: the poverty-stricken lodgings from which
ne was obliged to date—her sex—it was so hard
› persuade men of the existence of mind in a
voman!—once, to the fact of her marching into
fashionable publisher's shocked establishment

with her manuscript under her arm—forgettii
in her absorption, to put down the streami
umbrella in her hand, which confessed her to
yea, even *cab-less!* Neither did the bibliop
worthies themselves allege much tangible obj
tion against the work offered to their acce
ance,—which they yet seemed unanimous in
jecting; excepting that there was somethi
new and *queer* about "the thing" they did
like! They could not say exactly what it w
—but it was not written in the way Lady T
That, or the Other (it was the time of
supremacy of fashionable slip-slop) "w
things!"—"People," commented Sophia, "w
have no more idea of the realities of men a
manners, than Chinese porcelain painters! B
what in reality these gentlemen want, is a fi
name to put in the title page—and I have no
to offer them! I am sick of my own, and ho
to be rid of it soon! I don't want to go *dow*
to posterity by the disgraced name of the villa
now in Glamorgan jail! I told one of the
who twirled my package over a little dubiou
as he returned it, that if he chose he could publi
it under some *mannish* name or other, in ord
to justify the writer's possession of common sen

and of some little understanding of the real *waysey-paseys* of this best of all possible worlds! So he shut up like an oyster at once, and *knew* my book would not, could not, should not suit him, happen what might! . . . Another of their songs is that, as I have published nothing previously, they are afraid there is no opening at this moment for an *entirely new* author! As if to be a stale old one, would be such a recommendation!"

Her nearest approach to success appeared to be with some fourth or fifth-rate dealer in the light ware of literature, who after infinite hemming and hawings, and wailings over the badness of the times, and evil estate of the entire publishing trade, without exception, generously offered to undertake the risk and expenses of a small edition of the work, on condition that he received all the profits—if any!—that might arise. Wofully adding, that the almost certain loss the author must sustain! Sophia confessed but for this last contingency, she would gladly have accepted any means of producing her work for the public judgment. But with commendable pride and resolution, she refused to incur a responsibility which she might not by her own

independent efforts be enabled to meet—and the novel was at last put aside altogether in despair.

The indefatigable aspirant then betook herself to another course of action. She wrote a play—a melodrama—understanding that no other more elevated class of dramatic composition found favour with modern audiences—and which she imagined well suited for one of the London companies. She presented it to the manager—but there also she was destined to be disappointed. He liked the play itself very much, he confessed—but his principal actor, on whose abilities he chiefly relied, would not perform in a piece in which any other character was likely to attract, in however slight degree, the public attention. If, however, she could *entirely extinguish* the female part (which, he must say, he himself thought ridiculously prominent!), and deprive all the other small parts of any kind of rivalry with the one he thought might possibly suit that eminent gentleman, Mr. Fitz-Roscius—the manager promised—to take the subject again into consideration!

On this meagre hope Sophia performed the mutilating feat required of her, to the best of her ability, and returned with the maimed product—

only to find that meanwhile a successful new piece had been produced at Paris, so that of course an English one was entirely out of the question. The manager, however, as some indemnification for loss of time and gain of trouble, handed his applicant six little Parisian pieces to translate, *as literally as possible*, as he intended to select a new and original one out of the number, of his own composition, being himself an admired writer for the stage, though he lamented he was not so much of a French scholar as it was absolutely necessary an English dramatic author should be in these times! Nevertheless Sophia, not liking the titles of one or two of these ingenious models, declined the task.

She was now in a manner compelled to turn her attention in another direction. Cheap periodical literature was at this period taking its first decisive impulse towards popularity; and she managed to become regularly engaged as a tale-writer in one of these miscellanies for the million. At a very moderate salary, and with an infinitude of drudgery annexed! But nothing apparently could exceed Sophia's satisfaction and triumph in this first permanent employment, and the prospect of the means of maintaining herself

independently. And she often expressed herself to me delighted to write for "the people," so frank, so credulous, so natural in all save that they required a "little" exaggeration in everything, and liked the colours to be laid on "perhaps a trifle glaringly," without any of the finer hues and gradations! But how honest, how kindly, how chivalrously noble and tender-hearted this good, rough, popular public was! What a yearning it had for love, still love! and what infinite allowances it made! How fearlessly might you set before it the coarsest of scene-painting, the most wild, incongruous, and even impossible inventions in character and events, provided only that you took care to show the whole under rapidly-changing and variable lights, and roared through your gigantic tubes with some resemblance to the human voice—and always at the most vehement excitement pitch, whether of the tender and loving, or bellicose and stormy passions!

In spite, however, of my persevering inquiries, Sophia refused to inform me in which of these journals her compositions appeared. She would not, she said, suffer critics so refined to estimate her talent by these efforts. "Talk of out-

Herodng Herod merely!" she exclaimed; "I do both the sexes equal justice. I out-Termagant Termagant too! My women, dearest Mrs. Pomeroy, are such strange monstrosities of good and bad, that 'as I live and am a Christian,' I am sure *you* would think I was mad in the one, and your noble father in the other! His lordship does not, I am afraid, believe in woman's goodness on so extraordinary a scale! and you would not lend the least credit to my fables of their wonderful naughtiness when they are once 'set a-going' on the wrong slide!"

Sophia's literary affairs were in this condition when her detestable husband's trial came on, a few months after the perpetration of his last offences. He came out of the affair much as was expected; yet he seemed to lack no means of procuring the best legal assistance: zealous moneyed friends evidently supported him in the back ground. Moreover, the man himself, after so long an interval of enforced sobriety, had recovered the natural sharpness and craftiness of his intellectual faculties, and spared no exertions to save himself from the punishment he had merited. And perhaps there were other than legal promptings in the course of defence adopted

by Luxmoor! I was not ignorant—though i
was an exceedingly disagreeable knowledge to
me—that Scarlatt repeatedly visited his *friend*
in his captivity! So when the scandalous affai
came on for trial, Luxmoor endeavoured to breal
the force of the proofs against him by asserting
that his wife could prove his innocence, but tha
she had joined in a conspiracy of his disaffecte
Welsh parishioners against him,—who dislike
him for being an Englishman unable to preac
to them in their own dialect! And her motive
were so plainly asserted to be of the most di
creditable and even criminal order, that th
presiding judge interrupted the plea to decla
that he was not there to try Mrs. Luxmoor fo
a breach of her conjugal fidelity, but her husban
for one of the vilest offences possible against th
purity and happiness of society, by which fema
innocence was assailed in its earliest developme
under every circumstance that could exagger
the crime!

In spite, therefore, of all his own ingen
and the laboured eloquence of his counsel, I
moor was found guilty. But this sentence
probably mitigated by the doubts he cont
to throw in the case—above all, by the su

tion raised, that means of violent intoxication—under the influence of which he was admitted to be no better than a madman—had been purposely placed in his way. And to this must be added the excellence of the character he received, it grieves me to declare, from my husband and the elder Suett. Not that I believe either of them appeared very voluntarily in the affair; for as Madame Le Crampon was the agent employed to convey Luxmoor's *entreaties* for their countenance in this manner, I have little doubt she was furnished with arguments, the cogency of which neither of them thought it convenient to dispute. Luxmoor was only sentenced to six months' imprisonment; but he was now branded publicly with his infamy, and, as a matter of course, was deprived of his living. So that when he should come forth into the world again, he was apparently deprived of all resource, even in his undoubtedly great mental powers and acquirements, by the irredeemable ruin of his character.

Still Sophia was not satisfied with this catastrophe. "It is about as adequate to his guilt, as if you should condemn a devil to a fortnight in a warming pan!" she wrote to me. "Yet, God be praised! my sorrow at the smallness of

the punishment satisfies me that, happen may henceforward, Luxmoor has lost the p to injure me! No doubt he will come ou his dungeon willing to do me any further w in his scope. But if he came like a pa churning for slaughter, he cannot hurt me except *physically!* And, physically, I sh hope that even an English wife is not quite p out of the protection of the laws! He ca hurt me now, I say, but in the body! longer love him! I wonder how I could have loved him—I *hate* him! I hate him that if it would not endanger my own life, I c actually—I almost think I could actually de him with my own hand—kill him! But I soon to cease to be a wife, and then, in no need I fear the monster! For man can procure himself a slave in England by mar —and when my marriage with Luxmoor is solved, I shall cease, I conclude, to be expos the worst indignities—stripes, spurns, the contemptuous and capricious ill-usage to b agined—*as one!*"

It was shortly after this event that parlia assembled, and my father and husband wer London to attend it.

I did not accompany them. My mother's languishing state of health rendered it impossible for me to think of leaving her for any length of time at this juncture. Indeed her condition was so precarious—so frequently threatened the worst consequences—that one would have said, considering for how many years my father had not thought his senatorial duties of sufficient consequence to command more than his services by proxy, there was ample reason to excuse his personal attendance at this critical period. But he manifested the most eager determination, and even a remarkable degree of impatience, to appear in his place in parliament on the occasion. To be sure, events of momentous political consequence were in agitation, and the great Corn Law struggle, in which Lord Mauleverer took vehement part, was expected to be brought to a decisive issue. So I could lull myself with the firm assurance that this was my father's sole motive in desiring so earnestly to make the journey to London, in spite of all Scarlatt's renewed and very different surmises.

As for my mother, she was too much accustomed to be neglected and laid aside on almost any other consideration to complain of this de-

she trusted, to die alone!" But I wou
leave her "to die alone!"—I must unw
add, that at parting, Scarlatt shocked m
pressibly by entreating me "to keep my
alive, whatever I did, for that, he feared, v
only chance against *that* woman, if she
get her divorce—and he did not see well
could be prevented!" I remained incre
To say truth, I could not discern in So
irresistible a power of fascination as my h
seemed to attribute to her! and based my s
a good deal on his singularly exaggerated
(as I then thought it) of the influence s
likely to exercise by its means.

CHAPTER XI.

CORRESPONDENCE.

AD now two London correspondents, and ɔnally a third, for my father soon grew dis- ıted with my poor mother's really physical ıcity to answer his letters, and as the task lelegated to me, he finally addressed his ıunications directly to me.

ry little of this correspondence was on ılarly agreeable subjects. But Sophia's ɑunications were at least destitute of annoy- and offence to myself personally, excepting she wrote to beg me to request Mr. Pomeroy to honour her with a call, if he had any ıtion of the kind, as she resided where she] not wish to receive a visitor whom she had

known under better circumstances, and who was accustomed to the opulence of Plas Newydd, and the state and order observed at Mauleverer Castle! I could easily figure to myself another reason for this reserve in the flaming good character Scarlatt had thought proper to bestow on her dreadful husband at his trial, and which had doubtless proved of considerable advantage to him.

It was somewhat amusing to me—though the diversion was of a painful admixture—to compare the varied and sometimes opposed tone of this triple correspondence. My father mentioned Sophia only occasionally, and without apparent stress on any of the slight particulars he communicated. He had seen her—she looked excessively ill, and pale, and thin—was certainly fagged to death with her absurd literary labour—in which she yet persisted with the utmost obstinacy, without considering them worthy even of acknowledgment.—Soon after, it dropped incidentally, he had interested himself in procuring her a publisher for her novel—and had succeeded. He had dipped into it: it was really a production of remarkable talent, and of astonishing knowledge of the world in so young a woman! A little too florid and high-coloured—a fault

all young writers of genius—in its tone—
haps!—This subject was then entirely dis-
ssed, and he spoke of Sophia only in connexion
th her suit for a divorce:—the ecclesiastical
urt was dragging on at an intolerably slow
te, it appeared! He was doing what he could
accelerate the progress. He had taken some
ouble to secure her the services of two of the
st advocates in Doctors' Commons; who, as
ell as her proctors and his own solicitors, were
nanimously of opinion that the divorce could
ot possibly be refused. Finally, he announced
at the cause would come on shortly for judg-
ent, without seemingly attaching any very
culiar interest to the circumstance, saving as
e fortunes of my friend might be supposed to
terest me! My father's ideas, to judge from
s letters, were chiefly turned on political matters;
d it was unfortunately soon very easy for me
discern that anything but unanimity of opinion
on these prevailed between Lord Mauleverer
d the new member of parliament, his son-in-
w.

The truth is, the anticipated tergiversation of
r Robert Peel on the Corn Law question, was
ready agitating the political world. The pro-

bability of this parliamentary *coup d'état*, was already a subject of general discussion; and while my father remained immoveably fixed in his conservative opinions, Scarlatt seemed well inclined to march over to the new camp with the revolted Wallenstein of the party under whose auspices he had entered parliament.

This new cause of disruption, joined to so many others themselves never thoroughly soldered, were surely ample to account for the increasing coolness, amounting gradually to open alienation and repulse, of which Scarlatt complained in his letters to me, in his relations with his father-in-law. They both resided in the family town house, but after awhile came hardly to meet one another, saving at times, when it could not well be helped, at some formal meal in each other's company. Finally, when the Peel Cabinet disclosed its mystery, and a discussion between them on the subject revealed the conclusions they had formed, Scarlatt and his father-in-law appeared confessedly in a contrariety of political sentiment not unlikely to introduce its venom into their domestic relations. And yet my husband persisted in imputing the animosity maturing be-

tween them entirely to the influence of Sophia! He cherished an opinion—I know not how formed—that but for this he could, by force of his own arguments and eloquence, have won over his father-in-law to his own and Sir Robert Peel's policy of expediency! An adhesion to which, he pretty plainly intimated to me—surely with singular bad taste to a woman who, although a wife, was also a daughter!—would secure his elevation to the peerage conjointly with myself, "whenever a certain deplorable event should take place!"

I perceived, and intensely regretted, that these two alien beings were thus thrown into constant attrition and concussion, without any of the breaks I had hitherto been enabled to interpose between them to soften their collisions. But it grew daily more and more impossible for me to leave my mother, in her now visibly almost exhausted and dying state.

Scarlatt continued to write to me with the utmost exasperation against Sophia; and his insinuations against her conduct as respected Lord Mauleverer, though guarded, grew daily more distressing and mortifying to me, without being supported by a tittle of evidence. He

there, quite by accident, on some
his own, when he knew Lord Maule
the place, and Mrs. Luxmoor also,
had passed him as she went in. B
a thick veil, and pretended not to
and a good time after, the door of
room into which she was shown h
open, he saw her and his lordship
familiarly chair by chair, with a lo
around them, evidently discussing
document before them with equal
earnest interest! Then what could
from a nobleman of his lordship's
aristocratic feeling on all other occ
ally handing out one of the shabl
women he had seen for some time,
open streets, to an omnibus? An

talking to one another with the utmost cordiality, and evident marks of mutual and vivid interest; and though he could perceive that Mrs. Luxmoor declined the offer of his lordship's arm, they shook hands like warm and attached friends, loth to part, on the very steps of the vulgar vehicle which "the creature's poverty" obliged her to resort to!

With some obscurity of threat, Scarlatt assured me, in a subsequent letter, that he would teach "Madam" yet to remember him, though she affected to have forgotten him so completely!

There could not be the smallest doubt what she was looking forward to! he added. No man could for a moment believe that a woman so attached to the pomps and pleasures of the world, could really be content with writing horrible trash in penny publications, at a few shillings a week, and living in a garret at Kentish Town! For he had taken the trouble to ascertain where she *did* live, and what she wrote! She was only *running back, to jump higher*—trying to affect people, forsooth, with the contrast between her merits and her destiny, and excite admiration by a display of independence

and proud reliance on her talents! As talents, he left me to judge of them. He s[redacted] me some of the numbers of her compositi[redacted] and triumphantly invited me to give my opini[redacted] on them!

Now I confess that, in my judgment, th[redacted] vast and rude cartoons, Sophia's earliest pr[redacted] ductions, were more instinct with the pow[redacted] and creative force of a really popular geni[redacted], than the finest and most elaborate of h[redacted] finished cabinet compositions of later time[redacted]. And notwithstanding these popular legends of hers abounded in wild and improbable adventure—in the most outrageously sudden and tremendous vicissitudes of fate—I do not know but that their bold, unhesitating confidence in the reader's belief, exercised a more powerful spell on the imagination than the artificial contrivance and arrangement of incident in the most elevated classes of fiction. And though the black and white in morals stood there as plainly and unshadedly opposed as soot and snow with each other, I am not, perhaps, wrong in thinking that the morality inculcated would better bear the test of a close analysis than all the fine-spun, self-entangling sophistries of sen-

ent and exaggerated virtues with which hia's writings have since familiarised the lish novel-reader.

ut of all things, I am least anything when a critical! Let these remarks go for what are worth, under that admission. My ation was destined to be speedily turned to ubject involving interests that were, and ht to have been, more nearly affecting to

Scarlatt wrote me word that he found it ossible to resist the cogency of the Peel uments as to the necessity of a surrender of Corn Laws, and that consequently his den speech would be in favour of their al! He proposed to make one last effort induce his father-in-law to join him in the lution of opinion. But he plainly intimated t if his lordship persisted in his "exploded ions," he should not consider himself bound dhere to them, but should speak and vote as conscience and his duty to his country sug-ted!

Scarlatt's next epistle informed me Lord uleverer had given him a refusal in lan-ge he was quite certain that "most mali-us of women" must have inspired, but that

out for him by the untoward circ
my father's lending ear to her ma
gestions!

In consequence of this resolution,
of my repeated entreaties, that he w
make his vote a silent one, my hu
appearance as a politician was in op
tion of the sentiments of the constit
had placed him in the position he oc

As he was one of the earliest of
servative party to give in an adhe
new course of policy marked out b
of what had been the party of resis
latt's maiden effort in parliament
great attention. It made an upro
being vehemently cried up by the
while it excited quite furious indi
criticism on the part of those who

Scarlatt continued long after to be more publicly assailed and persecuted. Even his sire at Plas Newydd was said not to be sparing in their application! But Scarlatt enjoyed notoriety as if it had been fame, and gave himself all the airs of a martyr to a great and enlightened cause, far in advance of weaker intelligences! And the success of this first effort unhappily puffed him up for life with the notion that he possessed an eloquence to put him on a level with the greatest orators of ancient or of modern times, and which entitled him to pretend to the highest honours in a state governed by parliamentary majorities.

Scarlatt never believed, even after years of ineffectual efforts to follow up his success, that he owed the brilliancy of his *début* in great measure to factitious circumstances of the moment. But it must be allowed the speech itself was a remarkable one, and condensed almost all the chief arguments and defences for the act of imitative tergiversation it announced, with rare fluency and power of language. I have since heard that Luxmoor, from the depths of his captivity, assisted greatly in the composition of this harangue. But Scarlatt must not be denied his due share in the florid, though greatly over-

laid ornamentation of the discourse, and pr— for the extraordinary courage—my father de— nated it effrontery—with which he stood up the first time in the House of Commons, a declared that "for the good of this great em— he had foregone all private and local consider tions," and stood there to avow himself a co vert to free-trade principles, and determined vote for their application in the extinction laws to support which, it could not be denie he had been elevated to the place whence h made the declaration!

The alienation between my father and husbanc produced by this political transformation in th latter almost amounted to an open renewal o hostilities, but did not quite, until the circum stance happened which I am now compelled t narrate.

I continued my correspondence with Sophi during this whole interval, without being enable to detect in her communications aught but th very faintest shadows of support to Scarlatt vehement suspicions.

It is true she continued very warm in he praises of my father and of his goodness toward her. But had she not cause, without the neces

sity of ascribing any blameable motive to her or to him? A poor creature so persecuted, so abandoned, so friendless in the world—raised from the very depths of hopelessness by a powerful protection—her life itself possibly saved by Lord Mauleverer's energetic and courageous interposition,—indebted to him now for a prospect of fame and independence—what marvel if Sophia looked upon my father in the light of a superior being, endowed with almost supernatural attributes of generosity and goodness!—those of a Mecænas and of a St. George in one?

Of fame and independence! for Sophia wrote one word how, at his lordship's request, she had given him her oft-rejected manuscript for perusal—how he had pronounced it excellent for a first attempt—and how, finally, with a rare condescension, he took upon himself the trouble of offering the work again to the fashionable publisher, who had in the first instance rejected, but now accepted it with scarcely a glance at the MS.! Satisfied that whatever Lord Mauleverer approved must be excellent, this enlightened bibliopole in fact concluded an arrangement, on very advantageous terms, with the unknown authoress at once! Such was the

cence in his recommendation!

Then, again, as Sophia had alwa
the deepest admiration and reverer
lect, why should she not feel, and
daughter, her perception and hor
great talents of my father, so long
obscurity by his own neglect and th
that descended on the outset of
Was she bound always to remembe
my husband's family that had st
Mauleverer's way to the highest e
statesman, and that these exagger
father's legitimate pretensions we
renewed accusations against the Su

I could not but myself acknowl
that Sophia had little reason to b
any harmful effect these suggestiv

of defence against her suit, which it appeared he was determined to resist. Some of her own most special witnesses had been tampered with; and but that she also was powerfully supported by the vigilance and zeal of well-paid agents, her whole cause might have gone to wreck on some of the rocks and reefs thus raised, where all at first seemed such smooth and deep-blue sailing!

I do not suppose it was quite all for love—or for hate either—that Scarlatt lent this assistance to his worthless friend. Luxmoor was in possession, through his wife, of important secrets—threats of revealing which need not have been explicitly made to compel my husband's adhesion to his cause! But it must be confessed Scarlatt had abundant incentives of his own to induce him to lend every aid in his power to the opposition raised to that wretch's luckless wife's project of divorce.

At my earnest request, Sophia kept me constantly informed of the progress of her suit—if such a slow, lagging movement of events, obstructed at every step by the most expensive and tedious technicalities of procedure it is possible to imagine, could be called progress! It was that of a snail over a wilderness of withered furze

and briars!—One of her principal difficulties, Sophia assured me, arose from the fact that as soon as a woman becomes a wife in England, she is supposed instantly to pass into a state of non-entity—or at least of suspended vitality! Her whole existence and powers as a living and rational being are absorbed in those of the man, her husband! And it required a series of tangled and complicated evolutions to reinvest this non-entity with some portion of the functions of humanity, in order to enable it to make a demand to be released from endurance of the severest kinds of suffering animated and sentient existence could by possibility undergo and survive!

The evidence of a great number of witnesses had to be taken, residing in remote and scattered directions—and this of course lengthened the proceedings very considerably, ecclesiastical law permitting evidence to be given, in the form of depositions and written affidavits, by persons at a distance, instead of peremptorily assembling the witnesses at a given day and hour, and confronting and comparing their testimonies. The accused and witnesses are not necessarily brought face to face in these courts, it appeared; and the

collisions which so often elicit truth, are thus avoided—to the great promotion, no doubt, of the tranquillity of justice, and at whatever expense in other essentials! But in these antiquated courts, it is no wonder that Justice ascends the tribunal in soundless list slippers, and dozes often and long upon her easy chair on it, amidst the undertoned buzz and murmur of her equally lethargic retinue! It was, however, a great convenience to me only to be obliged to go to Llandaff to give my testimony in the cruelty part of the Luxmoor case—for my mother's sake, who now showed unmistakeable signs of an approaching catastrophe, in the decay in all the powers of existence fast falling on her. Not to mention that I was glad of the comparative privacy of this operation, from the aversion approaching to horror I had always entertained to appearing in any position of personal publicity. But the strangeness of the whole case, considering I was a witness on behalf of the wife, was greatly increased by the intelligence I received shortly after, that Scarlatt had received a citation to attend before the same court—on the part of the defence!

I wondered much—indeed I was made very

uneasy by speculation on the subject—wl advantage Luxmoor could hope to derive fr any evidence Scarlatt could give! And thi was destined to ascertain, very painfully, at remote interval, from my husband himself!

The heart-sickening delays and thwarting have briefly alluded to, were at length all ap rently surmounted. In a letter sparkling s bounding with the most confident hopes of s cess and of approaching liberation, Sop informed me that a day for the hearing of l cause was at last assigned, and that her f would be decided in the course of the ensui ten days. And I admit that I was not mu gratified by the conclusion of the note, in wh she begged me, with particular earnestness, inform her of my dear mother's *exact state a symptoms*, and whether she might hope to co and receive her kind congratulations on t approaching joyful event, in person, without much risk of causing her any dangerous agi tion?

Almost immediately after the receipt of t letter, Scarlatt presented himself, most un pectedly to me, and to us all, at Maulever It was just after the passing of the repeal act, t

I had no reason as yet to anticipate he would find it possible to absent himself from the absorbing game in which he was a player, and whose final results were still rattling in the political dice-box.

Scarlatt did not allow me to remain long in the flattering notion I perhaps at first entertained, that he had found it impossible longer to withstand a very natural wish—as I had now been for some time thinking it—to see his wife and children again after an absence of several months ——the first that had ever been between us!

In the first place he snatched up Sophia's letter, which I had happened to lay down as he entered, and commented upon its contents—after unceremoniously perusing them—with the utmost asperity. "Yes, yes; she wants to watch in person your mother's ebb to low-water-mark! —after which her own fortunes are to begin to flow! Meanwhile my lord will be busy finishing with their divorce in parliament! But, fair and softly, Madam Luxmoor! you have yet a seven-barred leap to take, and your horse is broken-knee'd!" He then informed me that he had taken this run down, at the greatest possible inconvenience, to obtain my concurrence in the

best means of putting a stumbling-block in
way of this audacious woman! He knew l
difficult it was to persuade me to anyth
reasonable, wherever an absurd refinement
fancy or feeling was concerned! But he ho
I could not hesitate on the point in quest
when I was convinced that his, and my childre
and my own destiny depended on the resolu
I might take in the emergency that had aris

Scarlatt proceeded to state that he was
tonished to find his conscientious and patri
sacrifice in support of the policy of Sir Rol
Peel, seemed to have irritated Lord Mauleve
hopelessly against him! Although living in
same house in town, they had rarely met
spoken together, since the final division! Fr
that time, his lordship had always dined abro
at his club—or *elsewhere*—where he was possi
also as welcome as money could make a ma
Scarlatt dined daily in solitary state, in Mauleve
House, and had every reason to conclude t
his lordship's alienation was complete and fin
Everything indeed tended towards an open r
ture between them—and at no very dist
period! Lord Mauleverer was evidently co
pletely under the control and influence of t

inexpressibly bad and crafty woman—that Sophia! And she, it was plain, was animated by an unappeasable spirit of vengeance against my husband! And now no gratification more suitable could possibly be devised than that by Sophia's means, the inheritance of the titles and estates of the House of Mauleverer should pass away from himself and me, and our children! She had certainly—most certainly!—fascinated Lord Mauleverer into a forgetfulness of all the other actuating principles of his career! It was useless to dissemble to ourselves that my mother was fast speeding to a better world! Permission to marry again, by act of parliament, demanded and urged on by the zeal and influence of Lord Mauleverer, would certainly not be refused to Sophia, if she obtained the preliminary of an ecclesiastical divorce! on that battle ground, accordingly, we must meet her, for if that event took place, our ruin was assured!

And Scarlatt was determined, as he reminded me he had so often declared, that it should *not* take place! He himself had suggested to Luxmoor the plea CONDONATION! And his lawyers assured them that, if sufficiently supported by evidence, there could be no doubt that in the

Ecclesiastical Courts—secretly animated, as the
are, by their tacit papistical tradition of th
sacramental nature of marriage, and its theo
retical indissolubility—this plea, substantiate
would justify the judges in falling into th
natural current of their predilections, and r
fusing Sophia the privileges she so "brazenly
demanded!

In conclusion, Scarlatt told me I had in m
hands the most positive proofs of this allege
condonation, in the shape of the letter Soph
had written to me on her flight from Llanhov
to London!

As to the cruelty, he went on to obser
without seeming to notice my surprise, it
notorious that hardly any extremity of it see
to justify ecclesiastical judges, according to
favourite maxims, in pronouncing so gr
punishment on the offending husband
separate him for ever from the woman
"God had given him as the spouse
bosom!" And, moreover, when the sh
the revolting provocations Sophia had gi
husband, came to be considered, no ma
possibly adjudge that she had receiv
than the just punishment of her own

and purposely arranged course of disobedience and irritation!

Scarlatt, doubtless, thought he had charged me sufficiently, by his previous arguments and allegations, to consent without difficulty to the demand, which he now made to me, to place this invaluable document in the hands of Luxmoor's advocates! And I cannot deny that the incessant iteration of the same accusation—the possibility of its correctness—the disastrous influence Sophia's over my father might have in its results on the destinies of all who were most dear to me!—now broke upon me in a livid and appalling light! But I was utterly incapable of such a deed of deliberate and even treacherous counteraction! I refused in the most positive terms, and at once! In vain did Scarlatt renew all his most potent arguments—in vain did he assure me that Sophia was the most guilty and depraved of women, and that she would be clearly proved so at the trial! In vain did he endeavour to provoke the vindictive fiend of jealousy in my heart, by declaring he was convinced her animosity against himself arose from his slighting all her advances towards a renewal of their first happily broken-off rela-

tions! I stung him, in return, by de
accusation as a fiction of his own absu
and by repeating to him expressions o
tempt and dislike which from time
Sophia had dropped, even in my hearir
him. Somewhat unjustifiably I did so, l
I was infinitely provoked. I even ins
preference formerly—a preference so
so enduring—for her worthless satyr
band, and the designs he now imput
with regard to my father! We b
angry. In short, for the first time
union, my husband and I had a rea
and mutually obstinate and defying co

This ended by his furiously assuring
in spite of my obstinacy, for the sake
and justice, he should feel called upc
openly at the trial the existence and c
the letter—which he could repeat, he
almost word for word! But the C
power to compel me to produce it, a
less would use it! Upon hearing whi
to my cabinet, produced the dangero
and tore it into a thousand pieces be
And I scattered these, I remember, ir
rium of my excitement, into the

which was filled with an upholsterer's imitation of flame, in the shape of curling gold wire; and this, brightly illuminated by the sun, perhaps gave me the notion at the moment that I had finally disposed of the fragments! Or rather I never thought on that matter, but overcome by an agony of mingled feelings, and fearful that I should commit myself to some yet more violent display of temper and irritation, I rushed out of the apartment, and retired to my own bed chamber, where I spent several hours in a state of indescribable agitation and misery!

I had, however, disposed, as I thought, of the cause of contention; and as the fervour of my passion subsided, I grew ashamed and almost alarmed at the really frenzied violence of my own demonstration! The sight of little Herbert, with his golden hair shining under his blue velvet cap, at play with Gelert in a court-yard under my window, farther softened my heart towards my husband—the bloomy urchin's sire, and whom he strongly resembled in feature. I considered that my outbreak was of a violence scarcely justified by the provocation, remembering how much Scarlatt held to be at stake in the struggle at hand. I thought, at last, that

it was incumbent upon me to acknowledge myself in the wrong, and endeavour to effect a reconciliation with my irritated husband.

I sought out Scarlatt accordingly, and found him busy in a little private study of his own he had assigned himself at Mauleverer. So busy that he only admitted me after repeated applications at the locked door, and a somewhat nay, very humiliating statement of my object in desiring to be allowed to enter!

I thought Scarlatt looked very much flurried and confused when at last he allowed me to set my foot in his sanctum. But he accepted my apology with great, even suspicious facility; and during the rest of his two or three days' sojourn at Mauleverer, this painful subject was not again discussed between us.

CHAPTER XII.

ECCLESIASTICAL JUSTICE!

IMMEDIATELY after my husband's return to London, I received a peremptory "citation" to appear before the judges of the Court of Arches, on a certain day, under divers pains and penalties, which to my own and my mother's inexperience appeared most formidable.

The document did not state in the least what I was wanted for by this tribunal; but of course with its heading of "Luxmoor *v.* Luxmoor," its general purport was explained. Moreover, as I was now cited to appear on the part of the "respondent," or defendant, it was to be con-

cluded Luxmoor had heard of my pos
the document I had destroyed, and in
enforce its production upon me.

On consulting with our family lega
in the country, it appeared that I had
of refusing or evading obedience to
mons. A recent Act of Parliament
judges in the Ecclesiastical Courts au
compel persons making affidavits o
depositions, in causes before them, to
a *vivâ voce* examination and interpellat

I was therefore compelled to "ac
vice," and resolve upon a journey a
London.

Satisfied that I had effectually destr
document that might have been of inju
friend, I had no great reluctance to th
sion on any other score than my
extreme debility and unwillingness to
me. But she had been as she was, with
any perceptible change, for weeks; and
purposely concealed from her my angr
sion with my husband, and its cause,
gined I was cited to the Arches' Court
of Sophia, and with her usual tender c
tion for her, urged upon me not to

occasion of doing her any service! On the whole, I determined on the journey; though I delayed my departure to the latest possible moment, and gave a solemn assurance at parting, to my mother, that I would return to her as speedily as possibly I could!

Just before I set out I received another letter from Sophia, who was clearly quite unconscious of my proposed excursion, joyfully informing me that her day of complete liberation was at hand, and naming it! Luxmoor, she said, in his cruellest inflictions, had often jeeringly boasted that he could get rid of *her* at any time, with the help of a little false swearing, and even unknown to herself, as the laws gave women no right or means of self-defence in such cases! Whereas, however guilty, she would find it all but impossible to get rid of him! She was going now, she said, to ascertain if such could in reality be the law of England—if any set of men, however *mannish*, could ever have legalised so monstrous a system of oppression against our sex!

I went to London, attended, at my request, by the country solicitor I have mentioned, and a female servant—finding there was no time to

wait for Scarlatt to come and escort me thither. And besides, unwilling to give him an opportunity for further discussion of an unpleasant topic.

An accident of some little importance, which happened on the line we were travelling, delayed us several hours on our journey. And I had been so anxious to lose no time away from my mother, that on arriving at the London terminus my legal friend called my attention to the fact that we should hardly have time to comply with the terms of my citation, unless we proceeded at once to our destination. We were both persuaded that my appearance at the court would be little more than a compliance with a form; and as my companion had telegraphed the cause of delay, and our confident expectation of arriving still in time to give any evidence that might be required from me, we thought it best to proceed at once to the Arches' Court, and signify my arrival for that purpose!

The case was still proceeding, though it was late in the day when we entered Doctors' Commons. I am thankful yet that I was thus spared a considerable portion of the raveningly excitement and suspense of the severe and ex-

possibly scandalous and horrible contest that had consumed the hours so far! Traces of the fearful climaxes undergone in their course, and the harassing strain on mind and nerve suffered by nearly all, appeared either in the agitated or exhausted expressions of most of the witnesses —into a numerous company of whom I was shown immediately on my arrival. These luckless people looked like the survivors of some cannibal shipwreck!

There was a great variety of persons present, male and female, among these; most of whom I had never seen till then. But I recognised some few—Squire Gawker; the servants at Llanhowel parsonage; some labouring men of the village, fathers of Sophia's maltreated schoolgirls—and the poor young things themselves. I remembered also her plump little bedazed and beflustered friend, the archdeacon. He was now sitting mournfully in a corner by himself, puffing and panting for breath, and occasionally fanning himself with his low-crowned, glossy hat. The two women Wrangham were also there—looking very much ashamed of themselves, to judge from their complexions of tarnished copper stewpans! I thought, too, that

I comprehended who another immense wom
was, looking like a fitting spouse for the Farn
Hercules, who sat with her eyes fixed on l
proportionate feet, gnawing her under lip a
horse gnaws at the contents of his nose ba
I remembered Sophia's description of Luxmoo
Cambridge *mastress*.

But what most concerned and surprised
was to recognise Sophia herself!—which I
almost instantly on entering the close, suf
cating apartment; the only air in which ente
through windows uncleaned for centuries, fr
a little dark court-yard, whither the light of
descended at a dusky angle for a few minutes
the day only!

She was sitting in a recess under one of
windows, quite by herself, on a coarse d
bench, which, for various reasons of commise
tion or of shunning contact, no other person
the crowded apartment had attempted to sha

Never before had I seen a countena
fraught with such fevered anxiety and expec
tion as Sophia's! An animal in the slaught
house, conscious of its approaching doom, co
not have turned a more fearfully dilated att
tion at every footstep—every sign of comi

destruction—than this unhappy woman turned now on me! But though she stared at me with eyes biggened to almost twice their natural size, it is my belief Sophia did not credit their evidence for several moments after I had entered fully into their circle of vision, and had recalled my memory to her personally by putting my arms round her neck, and kissing her with all the tenderness and compassion swelling in my heart at the spectacle!

"My dear, dear Sophia!" I exclaimed; "how exceedingly ill you look! What is the matter? Surely all *must* be going well with you in your unhappy cause!—as far as we may use such a word in it at all!"

"I do not know, Mrs. Pomeroy!" replied Sophia, in a hard, unnatural tone, while a vivid streak of crimson shot up like flame to her blanched cheek. "Or rather, I do know but too well!" she continued, in a stifled whisper. "Your husband—your husband for whom I have done so much!—is at this moment giving his evidence *against* me! I know what he is saying, my God! heartless, unmanly slanderer! at this very moment—while your father listens! —and that my cause, and all the little I have

yet left of hope and consolation on the earth, s for ever lost!"

"I can excuse your irritation, my unhap friend, at this moment!" I said, struck wi consternation also at these words. "But wh can Scarlatt say that will do you harm, even he is so inclined?—And I have destroyed t only document and information Luxmoor c have any motive in endeavouring to extract frc me!"

"You are come here against me then, too?- But I do not blame you, Hugh-Helena! I assisting in my destruction! *I have never da you anything but harm!* But that man h cause to believe I have done him all the good my power—and he is casting every stone on t wayside at me, to secure my utter crushing a ruin!"

"What has he done?" What can he do?" repeated, quite amazed.

"He has presented himself to prove—to ma me appear to the world—the most worthle the most depraved, the most shameless of wome —That my conduct justifies any measure cruelty my husband can have inflicted upon m That I, I, I—a woman, a fugitive from the pr

tection of a husband whom I had already infamously betrayed and deserted—attempted—at Plas Newydd—to—to—entrap *him*—your husband—Scarlatt Suett—Oh! not, not, Pomeroy! nought of nobility or generosity is akin to him! —into the commission of the very offence I now charge upon the remorseless wretch whose chains he is wreathing round me again as with a million adder-knots!"

I shall never forget Sophia's look as she uttered these words. Her eye burned with some consuming internal fire: she looked like a pantheress erecting its mane for mortal contest with some other beast of still wilder and more savage nature! Yet was there terror in all the frenzied exasperation of her words and manner.

I was struck to the heart. "But it is impossible—it is impossible!" I ejaculated. "Mr. Pomeroy—my husband—cannot be—so base, so unmanly, so dastardly—as to reveal such a secret!—to support so infamous a misstatement!"

"You do not yet then thoroughly appreciate your *husband*, Mrs. Pomeroy, if you think he is not capable of everything meriting those epithets! I have recognised his handiwork through this

the full account in the papers on the
morning—which, in spite of the horro
terror I experienced, a dreadful fascin
pelled me to peruse—those reports o
corrupting and abominable details mil
the lands where the English tongue
gloated even for weeks and months
they were spread to the furthest lim
circle—I wondered only how any wo
have survived shame so overwhelming
tion so accumulated and atrocious!

I do not propose—I should not ver
if I listened to the promptings of a
retaliation in my heart—to repeat th
the disgusting scandals of that drea
Heaven only knows whether any, or
of those unclean revelations—of tha
posure of the rotten cure of one of

the name of the God of Truth !—yet I must needs briefly allude to the heads of the accusation and defence. A case unhappily so universally and odiously familiar to the world, does not require more.

The evidence against Luxmoor was of a nature too decisive and overwhelming to be rebutted. His Cambridge mistress; the two miserable women, mother and daughter, whose seduction was possibly one of his most swinishly devilish offences;—the record of a court of criminal justice respecting his infamies at Llanhowel—presented a crushing mass of testimony of his guilt in the greater of the two charges brought against him. As respected that of cruelty, the unhappy wife herself had so carefully concealed, as a shame and disgrace to herself also, the brutal facts of her long maltreatment, that my evidence reciting the barbarous scene I had witnessed in the sexton's house at Llanhowel, was the only one she had found it possible to produce!

The worst particulars of Luxmoor's inhuman behaviour—his gross and animal sensuality—his drunkenness—his desertion of his wife, and suffering her to incur actual want in its most uncomfortable forms—the part of accomplice he had

played in various attempts at the corruption o
the unhappy wife, probably with a view to b
discharged from obligations towards her of whic
he had so speedily become weary—his subsequ
capricious pursuit of her—his pillaging her
her hard-won gains—his unmanly sport with h
fears and womanly dread of disgrace—his
more barbarous use of the gentler sentimen
she still continued so unhappily to cherish
him—by far the majority of these revolting d
tails, in their very nature, admitted not of pro
and depended, of course, chiefly on the victi
own assertions. But surely no woman, howe
inventive and depraved, could without so
most hideous foundation have raised so proba
and consistent a detail of the horrors and p
fidies of which Sophia declared herself to h
been the injured and insulted sufferer dur
nearly the whole period of her married life!

In answer, therefore, to charges, which could neither deny nor refute, Luxmoor fou
it possible to plead only condonation! For the atrocious acts of infidelity of which he sto
confessedly guilty, condonation was his plea! a
excessive and reasonable provocation for
single act of cruelty proved against him.

the other allegations he denied, or, as a final answer and refutation, claiming the benefit of the practice in the ecclesiastical courts of requiring the person complaining to enter them with what is commonly styled "clean hands," he preferred numerous counter charges against his wife, among which were painfully and disastrously conspicuous her attempts at the inveiglement of Scarlatt Suett!

In proof of the condonation, Luxmoor produced a formidable array of witnesses and a piece of evidence of which I was yet, happily, for a time unconscious.

The very notoriety of the wretch's delinquencies in the various places he had polluted by his abode was a strong *primâ facie* proof in his favour, his advocates pleaded! Sophia's own witnesses were obliged to admit the reckless shamelessness distinguishing his depravity! The woman from Cambridge, who was animated by a spirit of bitter hostility against Luxmoor, was compelled to allow how often and violently she had forced the unfortunate wife to understand her open and continued rivalry! Mrs. Luxmoor's own testimony declared that her flight into Wales was occasioned by her discovery of

this resumed intrigue, and the persecution sh
sustained in consequence from her low an
malignant competitor. The villagers of Llan
howel—the Wrangham women—very unwi
lingly—for even the two latter deplorable cre
tures seemed to retain a kind of respect an
compassion for Sophia—were obliged to adm
the notoriety of the offences alleged, and th
the nearness of the dwellings rendered it all b
impossible that Sophia could have avoided for
ing suspicions verifiable almost from her ow
windows! Her kindly credulous friend, t
archdeacon, was brought forward to substantia
the fact that all these allegations had been urg
in the most prominent manner on her notic
and elaborately refuted and denied by herse
But decisive evidence of the pretended condon
tion, it was, at an early period of the trial, state
was contained in a letter from Mrs. Luxmoor
a material witness, at that moment absent, b
whose approach had only been retarded for
short period by an accident!

Sophia, whom constant reports of the progr
of the trial naturally reached, had not dream
that this witness could be myself, or what lett
could possibly be meant. She was racking h

brain on the supposition of a direct act of perjury and forgery on the part of her husband, when I was shown into the witness-room.

On this point, therefore, I could offer her some consolation. I could testify to the destruction of the only document in my hands that might possibly have been used against her. How its existence had been discovered at all she guessed too well; but the marks of affectionate interest, and the soothing assurances I lavished on her, must have satisfied her she had nothing to apprehend in the way of voluntary testimony against her on any point from me.

But she was justified in feeling to her soul's core the sting of the emotions naturally excited by the character of the evidence in support of Luxmoor's plea then being proceeded with! In rebutment of the charge of cruelty, this evil and crafty man alleged constant provocations on the part of his wife; and that her own misconduct, her reckless spirit of coquetry, the actual dishonour he had reason to apprehend she even courted to him and to herself, disqualified her from any claim to relief on the score of his own admitted infidelity!

In support of these dreadful counter charges,

several Cambridge young men—some of them of high rank, but chiefly of dissolute and reckless manners—were produced to bear witness to Mrs. Luxmoor's demeanour, while occupying the equivocal position she had accepted in that university. This certainly blameable submission, which consideration for her husband had originally prompted, was now alleged by his advocate to constitute a proof of her indifference to all the finer sensibilities and proprieties of her sex! These young men, to do them justice, were mostly very indignant at being called upon to appear against a woman whom they all seemed to like very much, on such a score. But the subtle, jesuitical lawyers into whose hands they were consigned speedily extracted from them all that was necessary to support the allegations brought forward. The effusions of wild wit and gaiety, unchecked by the formalities and restraints of the position she ought to have occupied—even occasionally (it now appeared) fired into reckless displays by the intoxicating beverages Luxmoor taught her to relish, or coaxed her into sharing—wit and gaiety, that lighted up into a kind of madness, flourished like the torches of the bacchantes on such

wild-aired verges of misery and desperation as those to which Sophia had been driven—were produced against her in that sober and solemn audience with the most strikingly disastrous effects.

Luxmoor's violent conduct and desertion at Cambridge seemed thus in some measure excused! But much more powerfully was this view of the case supported, when Scarlatt appeared to bear witness to the pretended attempt to lure him into an intrigue, when Sophia resided as a single woman at Plas Newydd!

My brow still reddens at the recollection that the man was my husband who made this shameful, this merciless revelation—representing Sophia throughout the whole transaction as a kind of Potiphar's wife, himself as the blameless but shamelessly tempted and craftily cajoled Joseph of the tale!

As to the inhuman acts of personal brutality to his wife, which my evidence—felt on all sides to be unimpeachable—amply substantiated, the theory of provocation was still maintained. The clownish Nimrod, Gawker, whose vanity had been so severely wounded by Sophia, sullenly admitted that on the night previous to the alleged

to be asleep, snoring drunk!" where
admitted that he stated he would go
would return on the following day with t
of a May fox, to make a proper tie for t
old rascal's wig, if Mrs. Luxmoor wo
him a proper comb and brush for the dr
being a rake and a birch broom! Th
further allowed that he had called on the
of the day on which I witnessed the as
his pink," and openly, and in as loud a
he could, called to "parson" in repetitio
threat over the churchyard wall, see
staggering about in it pretty far gone i
though so early in the morning. Up
Mrs. Luxmoor threw open a parlour
wished him every success in his day's sp
said she should have everything ready

ing!—only Mrs. Luxmoor seemed to have changed her mind, and having some fine lady for a visitor, received him with such coldness and incivility, that he walked off in disgust at once!

I was still ignorant of most of these particulars, with which Sophia herself was only very imperfectly acquainted, when I received my own summons to attend before the court. My arrival had been announced, and I was ordered in at the close of Scarlatt's evidence.

I had never been in a court of (so-called) justice before, and I felt a good deal agitated when I heard my name shouted, as it seemed to me, from some remote chamber of inquisition, while the messenger of the court repeated the summons like an echo at the door of the witness-room. But I pressed Sophia's hand encouragingly—and for the first time she returned my smile with one full of anguish, but also of trust and gratitude to myself personally. I felt comforted, and followed the officer out with a more assured step.

On entering the court, however, I was struck immediately with renewed consternation by two circumstances. One was, the appearance made by Scarlatt just leaving the witness-box—flushed

almost crimson with excitement—and a
what irresistibly seemed to me an indignar
contemptuous murmur from the entire audi
The other was the really dreadful aspect c
father, who was accommodated with a se
the judges' bench, and had been an a
of the whole day's proceedings. He sat
his arms crossed on his breast, and his blo
countenance was hardened into such an asp
stern but dreadful immoveability of endu
that I felt instinctively some internal
catastrophe of a tragical order was consumn
in his mind.

Scarlatt joined me as I entered, and wh
ing, "Now, don't make a fool of you
Remember our all and our children's all
stake!—you have only to answer plainly t
question!" he lent me his arm—I needed
support!—and brought me to the place ass
for persons under examination.

I remember distinctly discerning a
chalkily pallid old man, of a keen intell
countenance, half buried in crimson and
discoloured minever, who shot a quick
glance at me from under his black cap—
doubtless was the judge. I saw how my f

started from his gloomy absorption, as his glance of amazed recognition fell on me. But for some minutes I saw nothing else with any precision, until on a sudden a low-toned, bland, jesuitical voice came to my hearing, inquiring if I was the Honourable Hugh-Helena Pomeroy, wife of Scarlatt Pomeroy, Esq.,—the gentleman who had just left the bar?

I replied mechanically in the affirmative, and the advocate, who was Luxmoor's, seemed for a moment puzzled with the peculiarity of my position in the case. He exchanged a few low-toned words with a man in a black robe, who stood behind him, and who exactly resembled an inquisitor, with his pale, cadaverous, anxious, searching visage! The advocate then returned to his place, probably not yet quite steadied in his notions respecting me. And perhaps it was quite as much to gain time to right his own ideas, as in compassion to my evident discomposure, that he asked a series of indifferent questions of me before coming to the important one he had in view. Such as, was I acquainted with the party in the informations before the court, Mrs. Sophia Luxmoor? Had I ever visited her—and where?—Finally, the question came—did I

Of course, I answered in the af
these queries. And then the impor
put. Had I received a letter fro
Sophia Luxmoor, of a particular
was mentioned?

I was rather startled with the evid
accuracy of this information; but
the destruction I had effected, I ans
posedly enough, still in the affirmati

What had become of that letter
examining advocate continued, in
cajoling accents. It had become nece
ends of justice that it should be produ
I kindly produce it for the satisfaction

I answered, with a deep feeling o
exultation, that it was not possible
destroyed the letter!

they concern myself or Mrs. Lux-

Mrs. Luxmoor was a dear and inti-
nd of mine.
was a pause after this answer. The
sed his grey eyebrows from his attitude
y attention, and seemed to look with
ssion of impatience at Luxmoor's ad-

atter resumed: How had I destroyed
ment in question?
torn it to pieces.
had I done with the pieces?
cted for a moment. I was about to
hat I had thrown them into the fire,
some sudden and inexplicable revivifi-
memory I became distinctly aware, for
time, that I had only cast them on a
itation of flames in a grate! I know
t deep, unutterable dread assailed me,
; compelled to make the reply merely:
them into a fire-place!
became of them afterwards?
not know: they were probably removed
outine of domestic labour by a house-

Should I recognise the letter again, if I saw it?

Certainly: but that was impossible.

Not quite, Madam! Would I be so good as to inform the court whether or not this was the exact epistle, repieced?

And I was astounded by having placed before me, almost perfectly stitched together again, by an exertion of the most indefatigable patience and skill evidently, the entire of that lengthy document which I had torn into so many, many fragments, a few days previously, at Mauleverer!

I was petrified with dismay! My sight was so dazzled, that for some moments I could not at all comply with the pressing demands of the advocate on Sophia's part, who, observing my confusion, but of course supposing me on the contrary side to that he supported, raised his voice in a stormy and bullying tone, to require of me whether I pretended to recognise a piece of paper which had gone through so extraordinary a series of manipulations as to have entirely lost its identity, if it had ever possessed any, with a document that might *in part* possibly have been of some similar import?

The judge interposed by mildly reminding

me that I was bound to conceal no information in my power to afford; and he requested me to answer merely to the fact whether or not this letter was identical with the one I admitted myself to have received from the plaintiff in that cause, and which I declared myself to have torn to pieces and thrown into a fire-grate?

I turned the leaves over, and perused them, hoping to find some reason for doubt—some flaw that might authorise a negation to what I now understood in the very marrow of my bones was a decisive proof in bar of my poor friend's suit for liberation!

But I could find none. Everything was inexorably correct! You could scarcely, in the greater part of it, perceive that any repiecing had taken place at all!

Luxmoor's advocate insolently reminded me that I was sworn before my God, to speak the whole truth, and nothing but the truth! A breathless silence and the most eager attention of the entire auditory watched over my hesitating perusal. At last the judge, perceiving that I was too much agitated to pursue the necessary investigation, ordered an officer of the court to read the paper aloud!

moment I was overwhelmed with the
to whom this act of cruel and crafty
was imputable! But surely, surely t
rending reluctance with which I wa
compelled to admit the fact, ought
shielded me from any suspicion of
in this barbarous betrayal of confide
misery in what I was compelled to
have been patent to all present, for im
after I had heard the judge testily
the words, "Condonation is clearl
there!" I fainted away.

I was borne out of the court, and lu
escaped the hearing of the merciless an
tous, but according to the maxims of
siastical law, irresistible conclusions of
tence *against* the unfortunate plainti
suit!

uffered, was the wife of Luxmoor declared to e unworthy of any relief at the hands of the w!

The very reverend judge made a long and elo-uent preamble on the necessity and policy of pre-rving and increasing as much as possible the ifficulties in the way of any relaxation in the rength and unity of the great solder of society, y which nations and individuals are welded gether, and the altar of domestic peace raised all the holy charities and amenities of life! conviction of the indissolubility of the mar-ge union, except in cases which did not admit the shadow of doubt, was one of its main engths and securities in this moral and happy untry! He could not consider this case one, en apart from the repeated, evident, and he ight add, *flagitious* acts of condonation, ainly inspired by notions of the narrowest self-terest, or still worse motives, on the part of e very discreditable plaintiff in the suit. He nsidered, in addition, that Sophia Luxmoor's n conduct entirely disentitled her to the relief e prayed for at the hands of that court! And pparently fired with indignation at the accusa-ions urged against the poor woman, and

credited by him, the judge pronounced one of the severest philippics possible on her general character and demeanour in the married relation! Above all, her infamous behaviour under the respectable roof of the Plas Newydd family, so clearly testified to by the distinguished gentleman who had with so much difficulty escaped her vile artifices, satisfied him that, for the benefit of society itself, so dangerous a woman should not be permitted to escape altogether from the custody and guardianship of a husband!—whose own unhappy misconduct, perhaps, rather added to his qualifications as the jailer and restrainer of a person who disgraced her sex by imitating the worst and most injurious vices to society of the male one!

As to the charge of cruelty, considering the prodigious and almost unexampled provocations the respondent had received, this ecclesiastical Solomon could not, for one moment, entertain it on evidence so weak as the opinion of a young lady, evidently reared in the lap of indulgence and family union, apparently of a refined and sensitive organization—who was thus disqualified to form a correct judgment—on such a circumstance as a slight corporeal chastisement, inflicted

the heat of passion, by a husband so shamefully outraged and insulted, if not betrayed, in the nicest points of honour and domestic happiness. The delicacy and sensibility of the sex exposed it always to exaggeration in statements affecting such matters! And he confessed—without intending the slightest reflection on the court of common law that had pronounced sentence in the case—he should have been exposed to sift the evidence relating to the Lanhowel children, evidently under the control and guidance of a woman so unscrupulous and artful, and animated by so bitter a spirit of hostility against her husband, and of rebellion against the divine precept that required her to love the spouse whom he had given her as dearly as herself—with the utmost suspicion and the most jealous scrutiny! When it was remembered also that these infamous charges were preferred against a gentleman of talents acknowledged so eminent, one of the ornaments of the University to which he (the very reverend judge) had formerly the honour to belong: menber also of a most religious and honourable body of men, whose piety and virtue usually rendered them the worthy exponents of God's holy word in these realms!

On the whole, therefore, the judge declared that he should DISMISS THIS SUIT, recommending the parties, in all earnestness and tenderness of christian goodwill, and conviction of what would be for their best interests, both temporal and spiritual, to return to cohabitation, and the mutual charities and forbearance of the sacred and endearing relation in which they stood to each other, and which they seemed for awhile so unfortunately and scandalously for both—as almost always happened in such cases—to have laid aside and forgotten! The certainty that *death alone* could release married persons from the obligations and duties they had contracted towards each other and society, was, and had always been, one of the best guarantees to the happiness and purity of that most holy and beautiful relation in which, as husband and wife, they stood to each other, in this moral and Protestant country! And he hoped that while England and her ancient institutions continued reciprocally to flourish, no unhallowed attempt to reduce us in that most important respect to the level of continental and popish countries would ever be successful! Rather would he himself pray to be released before the fulness of his days

(this judge was nearly eighty!) than to live to witness in these realms so horrible a desecration of all that was most established, most English, most necessary to the preservation of the purity of our hearths! as would be involved in the notion that because two parties, who had bound themselves to each other by the indissoluble chain of marriage, found it somewhat irksome and heavy to bear, they were justified in calling upon that court to assist them towards a violent disruption of the links by the agency of secular power, which he more than doubted the Law of God (meaning the traditional one of the Arches' Court) could anywhere be found to support!

CHAPTER XIII.

CONSEQUENCES.

During the delivery of this solemn, and, I verily believe, conscientious mockery of all right and justice, I had recovered from my swoon in one of the passages of the court, and found Scarlatt supporting and bending over me with an appearance of very great anxiety.

He seemed, however, in no wise ashamed or abashed at what he had done. "Everything is fair in war, Hugh-Helena!" he said, exultantly, in answer to the reproach and anguish in my eyes. "He can't marry her now at all! And I was determined, however the case went, to make it impossible he ever should, without bringing eternal disgrace on the name he is so

proud of—to leave no possibility that Luxmoor's divorced consort should ever be received in society as Lady Mauleverer! Do you think I was going tamely to submit to have my own and our children's inheritance (you have some regard for our children, I suppose, yet!) lost, for want of opening my mouth, and telling the truth of one of the worst women that ever lived!"

"Let me go to Sophia—and satisfy her that at least I have nothing to do with this barbarous treachery!" I implored.

"Well, go, and tell her, with my compliments, that she needs no longer wait for your poor mother's uneasy shoes!—they will never fit her, she may depend!" Scarlatt replied, but without being able to infuse the bitterness of his own malignity into me.

I turned from him—from my husband—in scorn—even in a kind of horror! And I tottered my way back to the witness room, refusing his assistance, though he persisted in following me at a little distance behind.

I entered it. Sophia was still in her former position; but with even an increase of anxiety and horrified expectation in her countenance! She arose as I approached, and uttered an eager

"Well?" Then observing the expression in mine, she sank back in her seat, exclaiming, "What has been said? what has been done? I see my sentence to a million times worse than death in your eyes!"

I stammered out a fearful and confused account of what had happened to me—and the final words of the judge which had caught my ear as I sunk into my deadly swoon!

To my great astonishment nevertheless, Sophia seemed to rally, and grow defiant under the very stroke of the thunderbolt!

"Oh, and is this the farce you have played between you?" she said, glaring from Scarlatt to myself with a really withering expression of contempt and hatred in her maddened gaze!

I reiterated, in tones too earnest not to compel belief, the assurance of my innocence. But Scarlatt would not leave me even this poor consolation. "Do you think, Mrs. Luxmoor," he said, derisively admitting the imputation, "that our farce is at all to be compared with the tragi-comedy you thought you were playing with my Lord Mauleverer, and which was to end with a death and a marriage?"

"What do you mean, base man?" she swered, flashing upon him a terrible glance.
"That you will not be Lady Mauleverer in ıe to be presented at court this season!" was jeering reply.
Sophia's visage grew pale and livid, as if she l received the bite of some poisonous reptile.
' Some day," I heard her murmur to herself, a fearful undertone, " I must be avenged!"
' But not as you thought!—Look there!" l Scarlatt, pointing with a malignancy of speration and triumph I had scarcely conceived sible, in the presence of such distress—to the wd which was now streaming out of the ırt along the lobbies of the building. The ɔr of the chamber in which we were was open, l my father's stately figure was easily disguishable amidst the throng passing along t he looked neither to the right nor to the :, and never even glanced into the apartment, ıere he knew Sophia still remained, and ıither he had himself escorted her in the ɔrning with the utmost attention and politeness.
Sophia stared fixedly for a moment in the rection indicated. And then she turned to arlatt with a smile like the gleam of light on

a steel sharpened for murder, on her violet-hued lips!

"Yes!" she said, "you have triumphed there also! But the winning gamester rises with the stakes!—*We* have not yet played out our game!—This confidence should be mutual, Mr. Scarlatt Suett! and shall be!—If it be true that you have taken only an unwilling part in my ruin, Mrs. Pomeroy! come and hear what I can tell you, and *prove to you*, to-morrow . . . at those poor lodgings of mine, where, whatever this *man*—most emphatically, this *man!*—may tell you, no one of your house but yourself has ever set foot!"

"Excuse me, Mrs. Luxmoor! but you are not, in my opinion, fit society for a lady of station and character—and I forbid my wife, on the obedience she has sworn to me at the altar, to accept your invitation, or hold any further communication with you, of whatever kind!" said Scarlatt, in tones the most imperious and peremptory, that had ever yet passed his lips to me.

"See you how he dreads the truth?" exclaimed Sophia. "But do you mean miserably to submit to become this man's abject slave—infinitely your inferior in every quality that

ought to give the supremacy—in mind, in heart, in honour, in courage even, Hugh-Helena! for did ever dastard more signally betray himself than he, when the boy Ap Howel openly proclaimed him one? Will you, I say, suffer a mere craven and base-hearted intriguer like this to become your absolute master and tyrant? For such—unless you make a resolute stand—this man, I tell you, purposes to become to you! I give you true warning—it is in his nature, in his intent! But it is not in yours, I trust and believe, to pass willingly under such a yoke!—to exhaust existence in secret and powerless sighs, like your poor mother, with this aggravation of your sufferings that your oppressor has neither brain nor heart to give him any natural claims to be one!"

With all, I could not endure this contempt and opprobrium heaped on the father of my children!

"'Mrs. Luxmoor," I said, "the faith and obedience I have promised at the altar were without limitation or reservation. And if my husband requires of me the sacrifice of your friendship and—and society—I must and shall henceforth renounce both, if need be, for ever!"

reality brought about by collusion
racy!" returned Sophia, yielding
tide of her passion. "I am an
and I confess it! When Scarlatt
you for his wife, I swear to you by
malignity of his own heart, he kn
were the heiress of Mauleverer, an
at the very moment—besides the ori
fulness of their possession of the
estates at all—that his father was
defaulter and a defrauder, to a
amount, with the company he foun
the mines, and which, by a series of
still deludes and leads on to the edg
pice that will swallow all!"

"Come away, Hugh-Helena!
I tell you!" exclaimed Scarlatt; a
me, with an impetuosity amountin

we reached the exit; but Sophia had already vanished among the crowd of departing suitors, pleaders, and attendants of the various courts held within those antiquated, decayed, and therefore strictly emblematic buildings appropriated to the administration of Roman and ecclesiastical law!

We returned at once to Mauleverer House, our family town residence, where a decisive explanation with my father awaited us! He had desired to be informed of our arrival the moment it took place. Dinner was on the table, but he was in his private apartment. I sent him word that we were waiting his presence to commence the meal, hoping that further useless discussion on what had happened might be spared. And I was sitting with Scarlatt, silently condemning all that he urged and re-urged with angry vehemence in defence of his doings in the Luxmoor trial, when I heard my father's measured tread approach. He entered the dining-room—cold, inscrutable, menacing, as the statue of the commander to the banquet of Don Juan.

I began some timorous expressions of affection and welcome—I had only seen him, since my arrival, in the court of justice—when he sternly interrupted me. "Is it possible, Mrs. *Suett*,

that you are waiting for me with an expectation that I can ever again sit down, in any kind of communion or cordiality, with the miserable scoundrel whom you call your husband?" were the terrible words.

Scarlatt stared aghast at them. "Is it possible, Lord Mauleverer, you are still so besotted with this worthless woman as to be offended with me for having exposed her misconduct to the world?—which, besides, I was obliged to do! I was upon my oath. I was bound to speak the truth!"

"If you were a man with the common feelings of one—I do not say *gentleman!*—that word and Mr. Scarlatt Suett—for I will never again suffer you to debase my name by wearing it—cannot by possibility be associated! If, I say, Mr. Scarlatt Suett, you had one spark of manly or honourable feeling in your breast, I would endeavour to make you hide your head with shame for the cruel, the detestable betrayal of a woman's weakness — were it even vileness — you have made! But you have none whatever, and I will say no more on the subject! Enjoy your triumph to the fullest extent! You have overwhelmed with disgrace and dishonour from which she can

never rise an unfortunate and gifted woman—deprived her of the only disinterested friendship and protection she could yet command in the world—for I acknowledge that any woman who could ever have deemed you worthy of her notice must always have been unworthy of mine! Enjoy your triumph, but without my witnessing it! Henceforth I renounce the connexion you have thrust upon me by fraud and conspiracy, and will disown you everywhere for any relation of mine. So help me God! I will never again sleep under the same roof with you, eat at the same table with you, or join in any species of friendly intercourse with you, to the last hour of my existence!"

Scarlatt paused for a moment in his reply: but he had now lost all hope, and with it all fear. "Be it so, sir! I shall not pray the less that it may be a protracted one!—and that your admirable lady may also survive to reap the reward of her wonderful patience and endurance of the strange species of platonic rivalry you had assigned her with this distinguished ex-governess!" he said, with a combination of defiance and insolence in his manner I had not previously suspected in him. "As to my name,

luckily it does not depend upon your lordship's pleasure at present to deprive me of the advantage of signing myself a Pomeroy! And whether I am a *gentleman* or not, I shall assuredly some day be a *nobleman*—unless I should have the disadvantage to depart this transitory state of existence before your lordship! *I have the promise of it!*"

"The man who could betray a woman's generosity or perversity (it must have been a very madness, either of the senses, or of cupidity in her!) as you have done, Mr. Suett, must be a *coward!*—else I should answer you in the only manner suitable to your insolence!" replied my father, turning from him with a degree of contempt amounting to utter loathing. Then looking at me: "As to your unfortunate wife, whose once honourable nature you have corrupted to your own baseness—who has joined you in betraying her unhappy friend under so miserable a gloss of hypocrisy—if she persists in considering you as her husband, I renounce her as my daughter! What say you, madam? Will you return with me at once to Mauleverer, or never re-enter it again, and remain with this

man who is your husband only by such rites as join a tinker and a gipsy in a hedge?"

Of course—what could I do else, thus challenged?—I sided with the father of my children —with my husband! I answered this stern and insulting address in a spirit too much akin to it, perhaps—in words which I will not repeat. But the result was that I was compelled to relinquish even the prospect of soothing the dying hours of my poor mother, so rapidly advancing; and Scarlatt and I felt ourselves obliged to quit the house in which we were, before its roof had sheltered us together for a single night.

I was obliged to write from an hotel to my mother, accounting as briefly as I could for the cruel necessity of my absence from her bed of sorrow and death. Scarlatt also wrote to her, though he did not inform me of the fact— accompanying his letter with a copy of the morning paper that contained the fullest account of the dreadful trial in the Arches' Court on the previous day.

And when I myself came to read *that*, Scarlatt certainly had no occasion to renew, as he did in a most peremptory and violent manner,

his prohibition for me ever to renew any species of acquaintance or intercourse with Sophia Luxmoor!

When I had read all the horrible details of the case—when I beheld arrayed in overwhelming order and mass the series of accusations against that unhappy creature; even her own evidence of the crimes she had in a manner shared by enduring—when, above all, I read Scarlatt's account of the artifices and fascinations she had played off upon himself, with views even at the best so contemptibly mercenary and worldly,—I was seized with a kind of terror, as well as an inexpressible horror of the woman; and felt as if to venture into her society were wilfully to put myself again into the circle of the spells of a malignant sorceress! Moreover, the insults and afflictions I had undergone on her account—even her last black revelations, which Scarlatt readily persuaded me were the foullest calumnies—completed my disgust and alienation.

But this uproar and tumult of evil renown were not in all things disastrous for Sophia. Her work had appeared, hitherto with but moderate success; but no sooner was it known

that the Mrs. Luxmoor of that wonderful and detestable *cause célèbre* was the authoress of the wildfire novelty, of which no one had as yet been able to form a decisive opinion, than the sale rose to something marvellous, and edition after edition appeared and disappeared before the public avidity was glutted, or some other glittering phenomenon attracted its capricious enthusiasm!

In the depths of my heart I still sufficiently admired and compassionated my former friend to rejoice in this sudden blaze of popularity; which I was, besides, gratified to think ensured her against the corporeal afflictions attendant on poverty and desertion.

New signs of her evil influence, however, appeared before long, and completed my aversion to the cause of so much suffering and alienation to myself.

Before we could establish ourselves in the new and extraordinarily magnificent residence Scarlatt insisted on taking in town, I received a message from my father, summoning me to my mother's death-bed; but under the express proviso that I was to *come alone*. And he had already had the unkindness to send away both

this, of course I complied with the t
invitation, and arrived at Maulevere
time to receive my poor mother's fi
release.

I will not dwell upon the sorrow
lars. But it was no slight aggrava
affliction in the event, to ascertai
mother herself was fully imbued with
that she had found a rival in the
Edmund Sutcliffe! The only rival
had ever had to dread throughout h
in all other respects unhappy union

Scarlatt—my reckless, mischief-n
band—anxious to take additiona
against Sophia's ascendancy, and
the part he had himself taken in th
instilled the idea into her; which h

viction of the worthlessness of her once-loved *protégée*. My mother's heart might be said to be finally broken, by apprehension that vengeance was, as it were, dealt to her from the grave of the man she had so unkindly deserted, for another who repaid her thus!

She could not depart in peace, as it seemed, without ascertaining the truth of this dread surmise. My father's spirit was at once broken and embittered by the mortification and disappointment he had suffered in the result of the Luxmoor trial. His heart was touched with a late remorse, contemplating the close of the long martyrdom he knew in his own soul he had inflicted, in his pride and relentless despotism, on her to whom reparation could no longer be made. I was present at the agonizing scene, in which my mother put the solemn question to him—and received in reply, in that moment of overwhelming contrition and remorse, the acknowledgment that before the revelations of the trial were made, aware of my mother's waning condition, he had indeed at one time contemplated the possibility of making Sophia Luxmoor his wife!

My mother in return implored her husband's

forgiveness for having married him while her heart was still, and irrevocably, another's! To that cause, and the consequent feeling of alienation which had never been overcome between them, the saintly woman ascribed all the misfortune of her own life, and the early neglect from which I had suffered so much calamity. "Neither of us loved our child as we ought to have loved her—as we should have loved her, had she been the child of our love!—or we should not have deserted her to the carelessness of strangers!" she murmured. "God forgive us, and avert the sad consequences I yet foresee to this uncongenial union our poor child has formed also!—I alone am to blame, and I receive this last blow from the hand of the daughter of Edmund Sutcliffe with resignation and pardon—for I have deserved it!"

Almost my mother's dying words continued to warn me to beware of the craft and duplicity and relentless spirit of self-aggrandizement which, with the clearsightedness of a vision purified of the mists of earthly passion and resentments, she could not yet fail to see were the animating springs of Sophia's character.

Her death finally consigned my father to a condition of profound gloom and remorseful reminiscence, which deepened before the close of his remaining years into that stern and almost savage misanthropy and love of solitude that in the end constituted him the wonder, and almost the terror of the country neighbourhood in which thenceforward, with scarcely any interruption, he continued to reside.

My father was a man of very peculiar temperament and character in all things. I cannot now pretend to deny that at this very period—and even to the latest hour of his life,—he continued to cherish a passion for Sophia, of such rooted intensity and absorption that in spite of the undiminished hatred and contempt with which he regarded my husband to the last, no other woman could find sufficient favour in his sight to induce him to form a new connexion that might have effectually barred the former's expectations. But his pride and exalted notions of female honour and purity were too severely shocked by the exposures relating to Sophia, to permit him to seek her society ever again! Even in a form in which I am constrained to admit my experience of her character hardly permits me

to hope she would have refused to welcome wealth and a powerful protection!

I had cause, at no very remote period, to know that she needed what aid either could have afforded her. Scarlatt allowed me no long interval to attempt the consolation of my unhappy father. He required me to attend him himself in London, that together we might enter on the course of life which he considered a necessary means of advancement in the ambitious career he had chalked out for himself. We were to constitute ourselves leaders of *ton*, and while a splendid luxury acquired for us a popular social distinction, he was to use it as a furtherance in his ascent to those dazzling stations of political eminence, he appeared to have no doubt he should attain, when once he had devoted himself to the object. We were accordingly in the midst of the splendour and tumult of our first season in the metropolis (we took amazingly as long as we were supposed to be enormously rich!) when I received a letter from Sophia, of which I subjoin an exact copy, that it may not be supposed I have added to, or diminished the facts therein so emphatically set forth.

CHAPTER XIV.

AN ENGLISH WIFE.

"You loved me once, Hugh-Helena! and in spite of the wrongs which, by my own assertion, rather than the accusation of others, I have done you, I have loved you—and still love you with perhaps the only pure and unselfish emotion of my existence! It is therefore to you, and to you alone, that I appeal in the extremity of my dire distress! If I fail with you, I shall know that I have no other refuge on earth—and I shall seek for none.

"You will be surprised, for you are not made after this world's fashion, to know that I ask money of you with this introduction! Yes money!—Not much. A few pounds will suffice

to bear me out of the clutch of the fangs
monster who, after gnawing so long at my
weary of the slow process of destruct
rending what remains of the quivering
bodily from my breast!

"And no doubt you will be still more su
to find that so soon after a great literary s
I can be in want of *twenty pounds!* I
require—I do not ask for more.

"Yet why should you be surprised? I
not know that I am an *English wife*—
English wife, in spite of all my efforts to
from so "holy and honourable an est
perdition! And that an English wife is
respects as absolutely the property of her h
as any black American slave of his owner

"I find it so. If I had lands, their re
yieldings of every kind would be Luxmoo
money, Luxmoor's absolutely; if childre
would be his, and I who bore them shoul
no part in them! But I have only m
person, and the products of the industry by
I weave a property, as it were, out of m
brain—and these are Luxmoor's! Al
moor's!—He has claimed them, and the
is allowed—enforced! The laws of E

ppointed to regulate the relations of the sexes, e so framed, that it is all but impossible for a oman to obtain any species of justice from their tion—while the lightest demand of man can t the whole crushing machinery at once in ction to overwhelm us into the dust!

"A plain recital of what has happened to me, l best explain my meaning. You know—I remember—in what a delirium of amaze-nt and horror you left me on the utterance of sentence that consigned me back again to hell, after a glimpse of the light, and one t of the sweet-smelling air of liberty! But know not—no other can ever know—the ndless excess of the agony I endured, when full consciousness of my calamity came upon

When incredulity was no longer possible! en I had perused the burning record of my race and ruin in the public journals, which iew would not leave the coarsest and most rant clown in England unacquainted with imputed enormities—with my unjust but terable ignominy!—which for ever associated in the minds of my countrywomen with the minable perjuries of the miscreant Luxmoor ndorsed as it seemed, and ratified by the

ment, I might have read it alike i
father's demeanour when he retu
letter of appeal unopened—and in
of the poor and, until then, kind a
woman who kept the lodgings I occ
husband—a respectable, quiet, good
ordered her to give me notice in
quit them!

"In this lowest depth of anguish
a brilliant ray of light pierced th
restored me for a while to the po
hopeful and even glorified and en
ence! The kind of happiness wh
of woman most craves—husband,
joy of household love and cares—
eluded my attainment. But at le
mockery of the realities I had lo
gorgeous wings before me, and se

the dust, and raised it wreathed with laurels, amid what seemed to be a triumphant pæan of victory! I was assured of a proud literary success. I took my place, I thought, where I had always most desired to find it, among the intellectually gifted and honoured of the land!

"Moreover, this success secured me, as I dreamed, from the horrors and temptations of destitution, which former experience had taught me to dread, perhaps, too much. Nay, it seemed to guarantee me even against the fangs of those grim hounds of want, which I had beheld crouching so long with their ribby flanks on my threshold! I had established myself as a writer. Continued exertion only was necessary to secure me all the comforts, some, perhaps, of the luxuries of life. Toil of this kind I had never shrunk from. Toil of this kind was even useful and beneficial to a person so situated, whose mind required to be kept in constant activity, lest it should sit down in the midst of its wrongs and crushed hopes, and, like a mother whose children lie slain around her, madden as it gazed over the bleeding, mangled heaps! A consoling phantasy visited me! I dreamed that, by force of eloquent truth, I might retrieve the

I revived. I felt even the des
and ornamented existence, whi
animated me, return. I deemed
in taking some steps towards th
this condition by the flourishing
the progress of my work—the e
commanded—in the advantages
to share. I took a charming li
Kensington. I furnished it with
possibly some slight degree of rese
In spite of my misfortunes, I fo
some independent and superio
judged me from elevations ab
prejudices and detractions of the
formed some of these brave friend
uproar of public applause I lost
those serpent hisses of slander and
minded credulity of those who b

employment, the hope of a still brighter and more lasting appreciation, pleasing society, books, flowers. I dreamed not even then—after all I had undergone—I dreamed not the full, infernal egotism and oppression for women of man-made English law! I had laughed till I almost imagined I heard fiends reverberate my laughter from the abyss, at my judge's recommendation to me to return to my 'duty'—to the roof of the monster who had profaned and betrayed me so inexplicably beyond the measure of all infamy that even in that terrible brief, which will some day be his scroll of damnation, I had not dared to hint at all his atrocity! But I thought those were merely words of jeering and stony mockery, without validity or power of fulfilment. I thought I had only to refuse submission to the horrors of such a decree, to turn aside its blasting descent from my head!

"I was destined to discover my mistake. I needed money, and I applied to my publisher—who confessed himself my debtor in a heavy balance. But a wonderful circumstance had happened. In the brief interval since I had seen this gentleman last, my whole glass palace of fortune had received a stone that shivered all

its diamond panes! It came from my h
sling! From the dungeon where he
yet expiated the slight punishment orda
his enormities, he had sent my pub
peremptory notice not to pay a single
of my earnings to any one but to him
husband, as he called himself! The
therefore, declined, without my 'husban
nature to the receipt, to hand over to
sums due to me, or even any smaller po
account, excepting as a loan to myself pe
which he must depend upon my ho
repay!

"I could not believe in the full in
such law in a Christian land—a land t
been boasting itself the land of freed
security of individual rights for a thousan
I applied to one skilled in the exposition
deepest complexities of English law—th
rinth of the Minotaur, which you traver
such infinite perplexities and wanderin
to come upon destruction at last! But,
as it may be with regard to male rights
vileges, English law is simple enough w
plied to women. It consists simply in s
them of all rights, and denying them a

of vindication for wrongs! My good lawyer assured me that my 'husband' was proceeding quite legally. He had the power to enforce his demand, and my publisher had no power to refuse handing over to him the proceeds of my toil and ingenuity. Even had the ecclesiastical law pronounced for a divorce in my favour, the common law—that beauteous embodiment of the free will and conscience of the nation!—would have continued to transfer any property I possessed, or ever might possess, to the person whom the church had deemed unworthy to exercise the rights she had herself conferred upon him, in the name of God! 'The law of England, my dear madam,' said my man of it, quite pleasantly, 'contemplates a species of absorption, or *suspension of the separate existence* of a woman during the whole period of her wifehood! Wives can have no property even in their own persons, unless by pre-nuptial contract—and none appears to have taken place in this instance. It makes no difference whatever that the property in question is the result of a woman's own industry and abilities, mental or otherwise. Personal property is even more particularly than any other made over to the husband by our law;

of your husband, and all your acqui
be his, of whatever species. I am
for you, I assure you. I consider o
these points a disgrace to any civilize
nity ; but you ask me for the law, Mrs.
and I have given it you ! Perhaps
treme a case as this—I should be loth
but if your publisher were a man of
would not object to the defence of
at law, it is just possible that a ju
own I should not like such an ap
made on my own authority—beca
country where the men who make th
minister them, there is no knowing
might decide upon as the proper
husband's prerogatives. I know wh
judges would !'

"But my publisher was not 'a ma

peremptorily compelled him to pay the whole amount over to himself.

"Meanwhile, as you may imagine, I found myself reduced to great straits in my cottage *ornée*. But for my dear 'people,' whom I took to write for again, after the quarrel with my timorous, fashionable publisher, I must have *starved!* But you may imagine how miserable I was—continually dunned by persons reasonably anxious for their money, and speedily trumpeted, in consequence of the denials I was obliged to give, throughout my whole neighbourhood, as a female swindler!

"At last I bethought me—or my lawyer suggested, I forget which—that as Luxmoor persisted in being my husband, there were pains and penalties, as well as privileges, attached to the position! My 'husband' was bound to pay my debts, or go to prison for them! I referred my creditors to the Reverend Carolus Luxmoor: but he was a match for me still! He was living with his wooden paramour, Madame Le Crampon, in wasteful luxury on the product of my novel; but he suffered judgment to pass in the demands made upon him, and my cottage *ornée* was stripped of every

article of furniture in it, under an execution. The landlord very properly turned me out of doors immediately afterwards, and I left Kensington with a reputation equivalent to that of a robber and rogue in the stronger sex!

"I now resolved not to write another word, but to compel Luxmoor, as I imagined he was bound, to maintain me, since he would not allow me to maintain myself. But I soon ascertained that to force this 'husband' of mine to afford me even the necessaries of life, it was indispensable that I should live with him—'cohabit' is the word—under the same roof: dwell with the vilest and most detestable of men, and with his hateful paramour also, I suppose!—at the constant danger of my life, and to the certain destruction of my health and whole comfort and peace in existence! Luxmoor was not liable for any expenses I might contract, unless he had deserted me! or had turned me out of doors! or we had separated by mutual consent, and he had engaged to allow me a separate maintenance! He had not done any of these things—good, inoffensive man! On the contrary, I had deserted *him*!—had left the sheltering protection of his roof, entirely

without his permission, you know! Besides, it was also a necessary preliminary that I should be reduced to ask my bread at the parish poor-gate—'become chargeable to my union'—before any steps could be taken to force my kind husband to allow me a portion of my own earnings to live upon!

"After all, I could not bear the idea of the workhouse! So I determined to content myself with the poor pay of my penny journals, whose conductors were not so fearful of lawsuits—and live as I best might, until it should please God to send me some release.

"But this did not at all suit the designs of my rapacious enslavers. They suspected, possibly, that I made money by my pen anonymously! So they fell upon a new contrivance to force me to come to terms with them, and give myself up as a laborious bondswoman for the remainder of my life, to provide them with the means of ease and luxury! For it is impossible that the ruffian, my pretended husband—who, I hear, has threatened to take my life whenever he meets with me—or his vindictive and jealous paramour, can be in earnest in urging on the suit Luxmoor has 'promoted'

against me, in those same wise and humane Ecclesiastical Courts, for what they are pleased to style, with that peculiar vivacity that distinguishes them, a 'Restoration of Conjugal Rights!' I have no means now of defending my part in the suit, and consequently I am told judgment will necessarily go against me, and * * * * * * *

"A dreadful scene has occurred since I wrote that *and* above, which has finally driven me on the course in which, dearest, once friend!—still dearest, whether friend or not!—I ask for your merciful aid!

"The wretch, Luxmoor—quite sober for a marvel of his usual liquids, but drunk with passion and blasphemous fury—has just burst into my apartment, in spite of the efforts of the poor half-starved woman, the landlady of the wretched abode in which I now live! Dreading such a visitation, I had begged her to refuse me to every one. But my dear 'husband' would not be denied! 'She is my wife—I will see her! She is my *wife*, I tell you! Everything that is hers, is mine! What the devil do you tell me about *her* apartment—*her* private chamber—being *hers?* Everything that is hers, is

ne! She has nothing—is nothing—while I, husband, exist!' And bursting into a rse laugh, 'You will see by her terror that can't deny I am her husband!'

"The sound of his approach, boisterous as t of a cannon ball rending its way through ry obstacle, struck me, indeed, with a dread annot describe. I expected nothing less than rder—my immediate destruction! But I s even tongue-tied with fear. Had there en any means of flight, however dangerous, I ould have taken it. But there was none. I uld only afford lodgings in a garret—at a ter- le height above the busy and teeming, but k and pestiferous street I was forced to abit. The pen with which I was plodding ough my weekly drudgery dropped from my gers—

"However, at first the wretch appeared before in a very different style from what I had ected; and I recovered my senses when I nd he did not intend completely to deprive of them. He even deigned to apologise for noise and brutality of his approach. 'But t naughty woman wanted to prevent him m seeing his dear wife: let no man, and *à*

lebiliori, no woman, presume to separate whom God has joined! Might he request the good lady, now she was satisfied for the credit of her house who he was, to leave us for a few moments together? He was sure her children—the one especially that was squalling in the cradle in the kitchen—must need attending to! She must see—however honest her house undoubtedly was, as she said—that no disparagement to its virtue was intended! We were *husband and wife*—not only by marriage, but by the extra solemnity of a decree of a court from which there was no appeal! No, she would not go!'—(for the good creature hesitated, seeing how frightened I looked—she has a husband herself—a brute, who every now and then beats her to a mummy!)—'Then he must take the liberty of turning her out of *his* apartment, for since it was mine, it was his—and as long *we* paid our rent, she was an intruder th when he bade her leave it!'

"I had come to the conclusion, by that ti that if he came to murder me, he might as we I was so weary of terror and persecution. I told my kind landlady to go, and she we We were left alone—my 'husband' and I.

is a strange fellow, after all, this detestable mate of mine! He sat himself down on the miserable little broken-clawed deal table on whose planks I write, and said—looking round, quite in a complacent, kindly tone—'Well, you must admit, Sophia, you haven't made much of a move in the affair, even for yourself! I declare I think my cell in Glamorgan jail was better and more tidily furnished than this of yours in Broad Street, St. Giles! And I should think this close air can't be good for your health, after the brisk Welsh breezes!' And so he went on to tell me, quite in the same comfortable, equable tone, that it was really very absurd of me to take up with an obstinacy of living so wretchedly, when he knew for certain I might easily earn my eight hundred a year or thousand —more, in fact, a good deal more, if I followed up my first success properly! Now he would not be hard upon me, though I had attempted to make that darling Daniel of a judge believe him capable of some degree of unkindness towards me! He knew I had had my troubles; but I must allow I had brought plenty upon him too! He should need a wonderful lot of fresh air and good feedings before he got over

his prison affair! Then I had deprived him of the capital thing he had of it at Llanhowel—and his character was so devilishly *ragged*, that he did not think he should ever again be able to earn his living by honest means! Then I had set all my cursed creditors upon him, as if he had not plenty of his own! His friends were, he supposed, a little tired of helping him out of the ditch—*the Suetts* had come down handsomely; but even they were growing a little fractious, and one should not ride even an *unwilling ass* to death!

"In short, he came to make me an offer, which he thought would be mutually advantageous—and he would not boggle any longer in preliminaries! I must see he had it in his power to compel me to anything he thought proper—but he was weary of a life of wrangling himself—not particularly fond of lawyers, or of sucking oyster shells!—He had no desire to torment me personally: he was as tired of me as I could possibly be of him! And after all, Madam La Crampon—who honored him at the moment with her affections—was a very agreeable sort of a woman—and took no delight in crossing his amusements and enjoyments as I had always

done! On the whole, therefore, he had come to the resolution of permitting me to separate by a formal document, with the understanding that he was to allow me one-third of whatever I earned by literary labour, he receiving the money in the first place, and I guaranteeing not to write less than three novels per annum—which portion he calculated would yield me—with a little extra work perhaps—quite sufficient to maintain me in a position of comfort and respectability. The other two-thirds must go to him, as he had many extra expenses at the time, brought upon him by my own folly—until things were a little blown over, when he should be able to make himself all right again—and very likely we might in time agree to look over one another's little failings, and be as happy again together as ever we had been!'

"I am surely not such an insane fool as still to cherish the slightest regard for this detestable man! But I do really believe it was the mention of Madam Le Crampon that chiefly fired me into the frenzy of rage I felt and expressed on this proposition.

Luxmoor then speedily threw off his grinning mask, and showed me again the ferocious fiend-

that has always lurked beneath it! Sin[illegible]e would not listen to any reasonable terms, [illegible]e id he would show me in what a husban[illegible]'s uthority and rights consisted! He would s[illegible]e what I was busy at then and there!—Maki[illegible]g money on the sly, he supposed! and he wou[illegible]ld know who my correspondents were, and on wh[illegible]at subjects! It might be useful for him to kno[illegible]w! —Was my Lord Mauleverer quite well—a[illegible]nd how did he like paying his little bill at Docto[illegible]rs Commons? what he got *there*, he was afra[illegible]id, was scarcely worth the money!—but he suppos[illegible]ed his lordship indemnified himself for his liberali[illegible]ty, some way or other!

"My 'husband' then produced a chisel a[illegible]nd hammer, with which he came provided, inste[illegible]ead of a jemmy and crowbar, and began breaki[illegible]ing open my chest and drawers, and most shamefu[illegible]ully ransacking the contents of the few private rece[illegible]ep- tacles I possessed—examining my papers [illegible]s tossing my clothes—and scattering them in [illegible] the most reckless and brutal manner all over t[illegible] the room.

"My cries and lamentations summoned t[illegible] the woman of the house—who, finding her int[illegible]er- position useless, at my earnest entreaty, ran [illegible]ut

for a policeman. But before she could return, Luxmoor had made a bundle of the manuscript on which I was engaged, and of such articles of wearing apparel which he seemed to think might be useful elsewhere—possessed himself of a sovereign and some shillings—all I had in the world—and had got hold of a letter—the one I had ventured to direct to your noble father, as it was returned to me, still sealed—when my patience gave way. I seized it to take it away from him—and luckily managed to throw it by a jerk into the fire—there *was* a fire in my grate —would there had been in yours, at Mauleverer, dear Hugh-Helena!—Yet the success had nigh cost me dear, for the brute went into such a fury over his disappointment, that he vowed he would put me into the fire after my letter! And I was struggling with him for my life when the policeman came in most opportunely and released me! But understanding 'the gentleman was my husband!' he declared he had no authority to prevent him from taking everything he pleased to lay his hands upon, belonging (what a pleasant word!) to me!

"I could, however, and did prefer a charge of assault against my 'husband.' But the magis-

trate, being a *man*, and of course animated by a very proper *esprit de corps*, took a most clement view of the results of a quarrel between 'man and wife.' Luxmoor had only to pay a little fine to the poor-box, and give his own securities (he could not have procured any other) to be of peaceable demeanour, towards me and all other of the queen's liege subjects, for the space of three calendar months!—And to show that he meant to keep his word, he came yesterday evening with a 'monition' from the Court of Arches in his hand, ordering me to return to 'cohabitation' with him! But he added facetiously—for he was quite in a merry humour—that fearing I would not come to my Mahomet, my Mahomet was come to me! In plain English, that he meant to stay with me whether I would or not, and as my lawful owner, he forbade my leaving the house under any pretext whatever!

"Nothing but my gristly old rival's jealousy preserved me from extremities of brutality I shudder to contemplate! The people of the house dared not render me the least assistance, having found out that I was really my persecutor's wife! But I had made up my mind rather to perish, than to remain any longer in the apart-

ment confined with him, when luckily, at the moment when I was about to attempt a desperate sortie, Madam Le Crampon sent up some pretended message about a gentleman of the name of Pomeroy, desiring to see Luxmoor immediately at his own lodgings! And though he cursed and muttered sadly, she seems to have him under some control! He dared not disobey —a Parisienne is not quite the sort of personage to be set at defiance where 'the sensibilities' are concerned! He went down, and she walked off with him!—But no sooner was his back turned, than dreading he might bring her over to his own plans of coercion, I slipped on a shabby shawl and bonnet, charitably lent me by the mistress of the house, and escaped, all but absolutely penniless, into the streets.

"I spent the night under a tattered cabbage-booth in Covent Garden, exposed to all manner of insults; frequently scrutinized by policemen's bullseyes—and pronounced to be some drunken market woman, not worth the trouble of station-housing and fining. It was besides a very wet, tempestuous night, which was some protection for me from coarser human violence.

"I had still a few pence left to procure a little

breakfast this morning—and the poor kind woman at my lodgings gave me a direction to a friend of hers, where I can probably remain unmolested for a day or two. But I am left absolutely destitute!—without even an article of wearing apparel of any value, to enable me to repay the little debts I must contract with the poverty-stricken, but compassionate people, who have given me shelter.

"At the same time—(I formed the plan as I sat listening to the beating of the rain among the packages of oranges, whose scent put me in mind of Versailles)—I have devised a plan of extrication from my miseries in which I think I can securely calculate on your assistance. If I am forced back to the custody of that man, I know that murder will ensue—on one side or the other! If men have the right of the club, women have their appeal to the poison-bowl!—All English law is on the side of my oppressor. English law will compel me back to a polluted home—to the arms of an adulterer whose paramour will perhaps join in the reception with secret intents to relieve herself speedily of so irksome an addition to the family! English law will not, and cannot, protect me from any the most infernal outrages, bodily

and spiritual, if offered by a husband—and as mine it persists in acknowledging Carolus Luxmoor! Therefore I will take myself out of its barbarous jurisdiction! I propose to leave England, and reside for the remainder of my days (they cannot be many) on the continent. There I can earn my subsistence, however scantily, by teaching, or by renewed literary labour—which must continue anonymous, deprived of every motive of emulation and glory—deprived of the impulse which a first success might have given to future attempts—but at least secured from the felonious depredations of my husband and his paramour!

"Perhaps it is as well for me that it should be thus! I am degraded, fallen in my own estimation! Never again can I merit such triumph as the friends whom I venerate as well as love could wish me to achieve! If a lily grew amidst corruption, could it retain its white purity and musky balm? I shall take the taint of my atmosphere!—it must be so! At my best, I could never assume the proper slave-crouch of a woman before the world: and my critics will lose one of their chief means of

abuse when they do not know that they are abusing a woman! I shall write anonymously! What matters personal fame to me now? There are none now whom I wish, like the lover glow-worm, to attract to me by its glow! I am content to live and die in obscurity, so that I may thwart the designs of my enemies! I can take no better revenge on Luxmoor and his paramour than to withdraw their victim from their grasp! I will go hence, and live under a brighter and clearer sky, among men and manners not so stern and so roused in hostility against me! At Paris, or at Rome, I shall not be shunned as if I had the pestilence, merely because I will no longer be the slave of a worthless husband, and because I have had the misfortune once to be an *English wife!*

"Will you aid me in this attempt, dearest Mrs. Pomeroy, to the extent I have mentioned? In the name of your blessed mother, whose gentle spirit I learn has exhaled its last sigh, I implore of you this aid! I own myself vanquished by calamity! I have nothing now remaining but some last vestige of pride and feeling that prevents me from appealing yet

ain, in language I know he would not turn a
if ear to, to your noble father!

"It would be too much probably—certainly
to ask you to visit me in this lowly abode,
it I might take one last farewell!—weep for
e last time in the arms of her who *might*
ve been my sister! Alas! did not your
inted mother's dying words confess as
uch?"

I grieved then, and I grieve still in some sort,
er the course which my conviction of Sophia's
pocrisy and baneful spirit of intrigue—of the
ischiefs she had done to me and my husband,
d I imagined purposed yet to do us—dictated
me.

I sent her not money—for money I had not;
it all the means of raising it in my power, in
ie shape of some valuable jewels I possessed
—my right to dispose of which, having been my
other's, I thought could not be questioned.

I resided in a magnificent house, where every-
ing needful was supplied in profusion by the
laddin's lamp of credit! But there was as

little ready money appropriated to
as if I had been a perfect stranger
who was ostentatiously profuse in
—but mean and miserly in some to
excess—declared that I was too
indiscriminately generous to be ent
the strings of a purse!

I applied to him for a hundred p
insisted on knowing for what purpos
this sum—and when I told him
refused even to furnish me with the
Sophia herself had requested! "I
with her husband: that is our best
against Lord Mauleverer. She is g
in the hope only of enticing him t
where she can carry on her oper
unmolestedly. Do you know what L
told me?—that he expects he shall
a case for damages against your fath
terror with which she hazarded her
from him a letter directed in her
lordship! Luxmoor is only watchin
Or perhaps they are bribing him
divorce in his turn—and they hardl
it to a *man!*"

I made no reply, but I made a package of my mother's jewels, and sent them to Sophia, with these words merely accompanying: "Send me the duplicates, that I may some day redeem them. They are yours to dispose of so far. They were my mother's, who *forgave you* dying, although she knew of all your unkind treachery to her! I cannot—at least not yet! I desire never again to see you. Farewell for ever!"

Nevertheless, I was struck to the heart when in a few hours I received the jewels back, with these words in return from Sophia: "I asked for bread, and you gave me stones!—sparkling, precious stones, but stones still! I would not accept my salvation with such a message as you have sent with this glittering glass! But I am not so destitute and abandoned as I imagined myself. My misfortunes have raised me friends where I could not have dreamed to find them; and I need owe no thanks where I never feared to lose one as I have now—eternally!"

What she meant, or what she did, I know not; but I do know that for five years after she

lived abroad in a condition, according to report, of even luxurious affluence. It could not be positively known, though it was extensively surmised, how secured!

END OF VOL. II.

J. Billing, Printer, 103, Hatton Garden, London, and Guildford, Surrey.

MAULEVERER'S DIVORCE:

A STORY OF WOMAN'S WRONGS.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF

"WHITEFRIARS," "THE CITY BANKER," &c.

"Laws are that make the crimes that they condemn:
They have judged us; now let us judge of them!"—*L'Estrange.*

"Pelican's food, pelican's food, my masters! with mine own beak I rend my breast, and ye feed at the scatterings."—*A. Marlowe.*

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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MAULEVERER'S DIVORCE;

A STORY OF WOMAN'S WRONGS.

CHAPTER I.

TIME THE AVENGER.

A LAPSE of five years after the unhappy events recorded in the last chapter, found me on a glowing summer's day sitting in Mauleverer Castle, its mistress—perusing once more a letter in the handwriting of Sophia Luxmoor, which during all that long interval I had not again looked upon.

It was a reply to an announcement I had

been obliged, by peculiar circumstances, t make to her, on the demise of my father.

I was sad, very sad! Not merely that th distressing event alluded to was brought ba upon me, by the contents of the letter in n hand, with a painful force which the lapse several months since it had occurred had som what deadened. But other causes of disqu were abundantly suggested to me in the doc ment; and I can well account for that I exp rienced, now, as a faithful presentiment of t terrible misfortunes destined so soon to ov whelm me!

The letter bore a continental post-mark Lausanne.

It commenced in a strain which the tone my communication had neither demanded r encouraged—a tone of overflowing cordial and affectionateness, as if Mrs. Luxmoor and had only parted an evening before, and then t best of friends! As if our once kindly re tions had sustained no shock—no rupture— long interval of total abeyance!

It pleased this now skilful penwoman declare herself "melted in a flood of mingl joy and grief" when she recognised the "d

hand" once more, which she had ceased to hope would ever again address words to her that brought back the past with some touch of consolation and relenting in its scarred and ungainly visage! So my goodness in writing to her at all had affected her; for she would not, she did not believe, she had become to me the "Madam" of my address to her, after so long a silence! But however the case might be with me, I could not prevent *her* from always preserving the tenderest interest in all that concerned *my* welfare! I could not prevent *her* from cherishing unimpaired the love and gratitude she owed to me and mine!—heightened, if that were possible, by the surprising assurance of the generous remembrance and munificent kindness of which my noble father had made her the object, which, to her inexpressible grief, I had communicated with the melancholy intelligence of his death!

Inexpressible grief!—Yes! it grieved her to the heart, she said, that this event had been so sudden, so uncomforted by the presence of those who, in spite of many unhappy causes of alienation, must still have been the dearest to him!—the most sought for by his dying eyes!

self—to have soothed the decline of
and high-souled a career—since M
unhappy differences with his noble
so absolutely prohibited his daughter
on it!

I need not repeat the terms of th
eulogium with which it amused t
female rhetorician, to garland that
implacable tomb! For even descei
Lord Mauleverer forgot nothing
nothing! He continued openly h
last towards my husband, and adı
advances of reconciliation, on my
could include him. And of cours
hesitate in my choice between even
a husband!—Yet though I longed
reason for the tears I continued to
memory of a father who had hardly

unbending nature all the softest and deepest emotions of the human heart, and perceived only a chivalrous elevation and grandeur of character in the relentless pride and despotism that had always marked my father's!—From the pen of this woman, too, who had done so much to wrong my mother of the flowering of those late, aloe-like sensibilities, if Lord Mauleverer ever in reality opened his stern heart to their exposition, these praises came, methought, with an ill savour! In fact, I could not but construe much of this fine declamation into an indirect series of contrasting lights and sarcasms thrown on my husband!

With regard to the "munificent bequests" I announced to her, Sophia declared that she accepted, "with indescribable joy and gratitude," the gift of the little house and grounds near Mauleverer Castle, called "Morgana's Haunt," but declined, "at once and irrevocably," the legacy of ten thousand pounds, my father's dying wishes—which I had so nobly determined should be sacred—had assigned to her in addition!

"I am growing *old now*—upwards of thirty, I think, though I do not register time with too

much exactness of late! And I am mu
in my looks than in my years—you woul
know me, I should imagine!" this letter
to say. "Old then—and besides ver
weary I am! Weary of remembrance
beforehand of the future: weary of exile
above all things, of the life of literary t
drudgery to which I have condemned
that I might secure an unstained preser
ence, and a competency for the few year
the exhaustion of my heart and spirits suf
to hope—or to dread—may yet be mine
will believe that I have worked pretty ha
Lady Mauleverer, when I inform you that
works of fiction that have attracted the a
of more than the novel-reading world (
that is a gloriously extensive public, to
adays!) of latter years, under the name of 'C
DIAMOND,' are written by me—and by me
Are they not a real miracle of labour,
have no other merit?—I relinquished my
of an anonym, because I felt such would
be open to conjecture and suspicion. T
assumption of another cognomen has
preserved me from the rapacious perqu
of my vile husband! And when I con

secret to you now, you will perceive how incredulous I remain that you could ever wilfully have done me harm!

"As things are, I am in no need of the noble generosity, the fruition of which your own assures me I have amply sufficient for my own wants, and I have no relation—or even friend—in the world—whom I should desire to leave the *richer* for my passage over its burning ploughshares, excepting yourself! Why then should I subtract a sum from your inheritance, which a very brief period—I feel in all the waning powers of my frame!—must restore to you? A few books and flowers, and the society of those dearest friends of my youth, whose remembrance still lingers in my heart, like the scent of roseleaves in an emptied vase—would suffice to make all the happiness I could yet demand of fate—which I have yet indeed the moral or physical power to sustain! For, dear Lady Mauleverer! I have no longer the strength or courage to welcome even happiness, if it came in any new or agitating form!

"But now, if it had been given me to choose on all the earth the spot in which it would have pleased me best to wear out the sands of my

that great hearth, at quiet intervals,
remain in seclusion from the pomp a
of state the lords of Mauleverer must
resign themselves to at times! I there
with a thankfulness I will not atten
utterance to, this portion of your dear a
father's bequest, while I finally and
decline the pecuniary part of his m
On my death, which is perhaps not ve
'Morgana's Haunt' will revert to i
owners. But, meanwhile, do I ask
when I request yours and the Earl's
mission, to take possession at onc
delicious asylum, rendered still more
me by association with the generosity
tion that conferred it on me, and have
it to me?

'Morgana's Haunt' become my hermitage of repose, and I shall never desire to stray from it, for I have found only pain, struggle, envy, and sorrow, abroad on the highways of the world! I am ill, *very ill*, as I have said, and these wise men whom I have consulted, recommend me most earnestly to try what my own watery climate will do for me. My affairs in England would go none the worse for a little personal inspection! I do not even think I shall suffer so much in returning to the scene of my long dire agony! I can imagine a hare retracing the track of the hunt it has finally escaped from, very pleasantly! And I do think even my persevering husband (persevering in all evil, beyond praise!) must now have given up the hope or expectation of coercing me under the obedience of those atrocious laws which he endeavoured of yore to make the engines of his cruelty and rapacity! He must, I think, be weary of persecuting me without the least personal results or advantage! *Society* itself must almost be satisfied that this unseverable chain, which the two wretches it pretended to unite, have dragged at from their opposite ends, until all existence for both is entangled and destroyed in its iron links, can yet

never in reality force us together again
compel us to litter together again, cont
exhausted, as dogs of different species, t
been contending the whole day with
instincts at work, coupled at random in
I have parted with Luxmoor now ete
hope! *Eternally!*—He is not very like
thither, but I would not even ascend to
without tasting the bitterness of death, if I
I should meet with Luxmoor there! S
for this *indissoluble union* of ours!—I
able mockery!

"Besides, do you not think my
hawk himself must discern some degree
cency and injustice in making any furth
on his escaped but half-demolished prey
five years of my exile Luxmoor has be
in an union of his own voluntary forma
keeping—which is much more—with
Le Crampon. There must be someth
genial and suitable in their natures, ther
but for yonder sage-maximed ecclesiastic
might have received a 'solemn and pu
secration!' So my worthy judge styled i
little affair, in an aside chapel of St. M
at Paris! There must be!—for I have n

that she has attempted to poison him even once, or that he has thrown her out of window, or knocked her down, or set her on the fire—or, in fine, done to her any of the little acts of unkindness, *not at all amounting to cruelty*, he exhibited, at playful, rallying intervals, towards me! I hear they are now keeping *quite a respectable boarding-house* for young ladies (adults), at the court end of London, under the names of Monsieur and Madame *Moorlux*. And in this establishment, one would hope, my husband's genius for knocking about women finds a sufficient and somewhat legitimate exercise!

"It is my intention and hope, however, to elude the grasp of my lawful tormentor, in case he should be inclined to trouble me any more, by the perfect seclusion to which I purpose to devote myself at 'Morgana's Haunt.' I shall besides assume another name—a *spinster name*. I have lived so long alone now, that I really feel quite like one again. And as only you, dear Lady Mauleverer, and the Earl, if you kindly comply with my request, will be acquainted with my true identity, I may hope to enjoy the few years, or months, I yet calculate on in peace and quietness. For surely the *Earl of Mauleverer*

has forgiven the wrongs of *Scarlatt Suett?*—if ever I did him any—never in my intention, though perhaps in the perversity of my fate! You see I keep myself very well informed on all that happens of benefit to you: *Earl* and not *Baron!* The only thing that surprises me in the elevation you have both acquired, in the former title is, that, with his extraordinary abilities, Lord Mauleverer has stopped short in the attainment of that commanding position in the actual conduct of public affairs to which they ought to have raised him. As for any reason of complaint I might once myself have imagined I had against his lordship, in the long interval of *cooling down* I have enjoyed, I have seen the injustice of my exasperation! Under the influence of the opinions he must at that time have entertained, I recognize that Lord Mauleverer (the present Lord Mauleverer, of course) could not have acted otherwise than he did act. And any little superfluity of warmth in the execution of the resolves he judged necessary against my projects, I impute entirely to the generous enthusiasm of the faithful, though undeserved friendship, his lordship seems always to have entertained for his unworthy tutor!"

Such were the principal contents of Mrs. Luxmoor's reply to the dry announcement I had felt called upon to make to her of a circumstance that showed warningly to me how rooted the dominion she had once established remained in her victims' hearts!

My father died very suddenly—of an attack of gout in the stomach, to which his latter years' inordinate addiction to the pleasures of the table subjected him. I would fain not allude to the circumstance; but it is necessary to state that finally Lord Mauleverer sought indemnification for what, it appeared, was the second and greater disappointment of his career, in a course of the merest sensual indulgence. Thus indirectly Sophia contributed also to my father's catastrophe! In all other respects he died as he had lived. He never forgave my husband—nor, by any external sign in his lifetime, restored me to his favour. On the contrary, at the time of his death he was in the midst of a lawsuit with Scarlatt, who, as the guardian of our children, interfered to prevent the devastations he persisted in committing on the landed property of our family, which Lord Mauleverer knew he could not prevent from passing into my nominal pos-

session and the virtual enjoyment of
law. On the other hand, my father
his endeavours to the accumulation
of property which his precaution in
a ward of chancery, at the time o
enabled him to leave secured, as he i
my "sole use and benefit," out of t
the man whom, even in his last wil
nated as a person in whom he plac
dence, for the security of his daught
grandchildren's future comfort and i
of the world!

Acting on this angry conviction, I
verer left a will in which he secured
every known precaution and power
phraseology, a "separate property,"
of my husband's control, and in th
trustees, of the value of a hundre
pounds and upwards. This sum,
told me, was chiefly the savings of
years, and of his long continental re
which I now, for the first time, lear
dedicated himself with the view of a
means of recovering his lost coun
from the wealthy Suetts!

But this property was left to me

tain conditions, added in a secret codicil—if I may use the expression—which Lord Mauleverer scrawled to me, in the form of a letter, with almost his last efforts of understanding and will.

In the document mentioned he charged the disposable inheritance in question with a legacy of ten thousand pounds to Sophia Luxmoor, and a gift to her of a house and grounds in the immediate neighbourhood of Mauleverer Castle, known by the fantastic designation of "Morgana's Haunt," for a reason which I shall mention by and by. And he assigned, as a special motive for this latter bequest, his wish to show his utter disbelief in the main part of the counter-charges that had prevented Mrs. Luxmoor from receiving justice at the hands of the ecclesiastical judges!—alluding, doubtless, to Scarlatt's statements of her designs on himself! For not bequeathing the former part of the legacy in a more authentic form, he stated his reasons to be a desire not to give countenance to the odious and dishonouring reports he knew "Mr. Scarlatt Suett" had circulated respecting the terms of his acquaintance with that "wronged, and unhappy, and gifted woman;" and the assurance

of all the lawyers he had consulted that it would be impossible so to frame the terms of the legacy as to prevent her "atrocious husband" from obtaining the chief benefit of the acquisition, or giving him motives to renew the tortures he had already inflicted upon her, to extort it from her. As long as Luxmoor had no legal proof that his wife possessed anything, he could not reduce her again to beggary, and Sophia might be rescued from the life of toil and want my father knew she was subject to, and which she would not hitherto permit him to alleviate. My father added that he was satisfied he could confide in my good faith and honour, in spite of the *treacherous part I had formerly been cajoled into*, to perform his wish in this instance! But he enjoined me, under penalty of his dying malediction, to perform his will in this respect as completely as if he had been enabled to assign the gift by due course of law, without the danger of thereby enriching one of the most detestable of wretches and perjurers on the face of the earth in the person of the husband of Sophia Luxmoor!

At the conclusion of this remarkable document, my father called upon me to witness that

he died execrating laws that had irredeemably fastened "that bright and mounting spirit" to the earthworm, Luxmoor! and for ever debarred himself from repairing the misery of an early ill-assorted union, in one that would have satisfied all the life-long wishes and aspirations of his heart! Like most very young men, he had imagined that beauty of person was sufficient to make man's happiness in woman! But he had awakened to the conviction that *the intellectual, the disinterested, the high-souled!* were the qualities that only could content the ideal and yet truest yearnings of his own temperament; and all these exalted qualities he had found in Mrs. Luxmoor! But tyrannous laws intervened, and compelled her to remain the tortured slave of their lying formulas, in the dungeon of her detestable matrimony!

I had rigidly complied with my father's instructions. Yet not, I own, without feelings of profound dissatisfaction and reluctance!

In the first place, I no longer loved or valued Sophia as I had loved and valued her! Long absence—conviction of the duplicity of her character and actions—substitution of other and more intimate affections—an enlarged acquaint-

ance with the world and with society, which enabled me better to estimate the qualities t had once so dazzled me—all had contributec weaken, if not to dissolve, her spell! Tl again, the strange vitality of her influence fascination, after so long a cessation of t immediate action, alarmed and startled What little I had heard of Sophia, during long interval I have mentioned, was of a na to disgust and alienate! Luxmoor, who tinued to be favourably received by my husb though I disdained to hold any kind of ir course with him, diffused a very evil repor her manner of life in Paris. He affected to k all about it, through Madame Le Cram "his kind friend's" correspondents in that cap And as Sophia's literary exertions, under assumed name, were not suspected, there probabilities to support these statements, for was said to live in very good style in that cap It was nothing that she was also known to be received in its incurious and indulgent soc which asks no questions, provided it is rested or amused!

I felt that I had personally several and h

if not altogether intentional injuries, to complain of, received through Sophia's agency!

Was it not she who had alienated from me the affections of my father—who had given him the bitterest and most enduring of his provocations against my husband?—who had strewn my mother's deathbed with its sharpest thorns? Did I not owe to her, in fine—by her own confession owed it!—the position in which I found myself, riveted for ever, and by the most binding ties, to a nature whose uncongeniality every passing hour and event more strongly demonstrated to me?

For I must no longer conceal the fact! The magnificent disguise Sophia's mischievous genius wove for Scarlatt Suett, had fallen to rags and tatters in his wear; and I had learned to comprehend, but too plainly, who and what he really was to whom the ignorant credulity and passion of extreme youth had irrevocably bound me!

Far be it from me to dedicate these pages to the arraignment of a man, who can have no opportunity to defend himself in them, and against whom my testimony would seem tainted with suspicion! Let his actions alone

accuse him! The reader must gather
causes of the alienation and coldness which, l
before Sophia's second destructive advent,
admit to have prevailed between us, from w
he has seen recorded of my character and of
principal transactions in which my husb
figured! He will discern how greatly rep
nant his notions and deeds mostly were to ev
fine sense of justice, honour, and generosity
qualities to which I think I may assert so
claim, without imputation of an inordin
vanity! I speak particularly of the circu
stances attending the Luxmoor trial! T
cold-blooded meanness and vindictive dupli
of his retaliation on Sophia—his ungen
manly, perhaps unmanly, betrayal of her n
conduct towards him, even had I considered
in all the odious lights in which he possibly
at that time—would have disgusted any per
of feeling and sentiment!

During the first period of our marriage, i
true, Scarlatt had taken great pains to prese
around himself some scattered glory of t
bright illusion which had once so imposed u
my youthful imagination! But when he cea
to recognise in me the most effective agent

his mean but devouring ambition, he regarded it daily as less and less necessary to trouble himself to sustain a part for which nature had not well adapted him! The romantic and chivalrous lover degenerated finally, by subtle and yet strongly marked degrees, into the exacting, imperious, dissatisfied husband! For this husband's sake, I was obliged to spend the remainder of my life removed from the kindness and protection of my only surviving blood relation. His subsequent bitter animosity against my father, when he found there were no hopes of retrieving his favour, was a constant cause of inexpressible pain to me. As the mother and natural protectress of his children, I was bound to aid Scarlatt in the preservation of our inheritance intact. But how could I have the vehement hostility he evinced in the sometimes frivolous and vexatious suits he instituted against my father? How relish his undisguised joy in that father's death? How understand his disappointment and rage at the manner in which my father disposed of the property in his power? How endure, without sharp remonstrance, Scarlatt's violent and rancorous disrespect to that father's memory?

But in the very core of our natures—in mind and in heart—there were a thousand natural incompatibilities between us, which time, and the indifference to which we both came at last to conceal or gloss them over, constantly developed! Even in the first enraptured period of our union, when circumstances compelled us to be all in all to each other, it had fallen with a strange chill upon me to remark how utterly without emotion Scarlatt contemplated the most affecting or marvellous monuments of the past, while my whole frame thrilled at the very name of what we gazed on! He was as familiar as the guide book with the history of the celebrated scenes and ruins of Italy. Yet he would communicate his information to me, as we stood in the very midst of those attesting remains, in so mechanical and unsympathetic a tone, that even the grotto of Egeria became a hard and worthless matter of fact to me while he told its dreamy tale!

But the five years that followed our final rupture with my father, if they completed my disenchantment, by admitting me into the secret folds of that cold, haughty, domineering, cruel and revengeful temperament, yet effected for

this good—that I had grown accustomed to its manifestations, and in some measure reconciled to the failure or betrayal of my most cherished anticipations in the married life!

Not that I suffered myself to become the imbecile and resigned slave of the arbitrary character and despotic assumption of my husband! I had my mother's example before me as a warning in this respect! What had all her implicit devotion and submission acquired for her with her husband? Not even a chill approval! On the first opportunity he preferred a woman of audacious and levelling genius, who took delight in denying almost every species of established supremacy! Besides, I was naturally myself of a proud temper, impetuous and warm in all my feelings—governable enough by my affections, but against every other means of influence as revolting and resolute as my father's daughter might have been most expected to be!

CHAPTER II.

KISSED OR KICKED!

On the whole, up to the period of
death, Scarlatt and I had managed
very fair average married life, witho
serious or lasting cause of strife arisi
us. Our interests—our supposed i
least—continued identical. We sha
dantly in all the distractions and enjo
world offers. We were both still in
of our ages—and, I suppose I may s

d effacings of satiety, into that dreary
apathy and indifference that borders so
ly on utter disgust—my own disco-
the secrets of his character had kept
e, and so nicely balanced my regrets
ictions of the little value of the losses
ed in those twisted and cross-grained
, that I had sunk on my part likewise,
cquiescence that seemed probably to
flection of his own discolouring and
ntiments.

was not so. If the idolatrous homage
h I had at first regarded Scarlatt—if
ous but unreal tints that once sur-
im, had vanished on nearer inspection,
ay from the glow-worm—still he had
lover of my youth; the only being of
hom I have ever looked upon with the
assion—whom nature and the laws
I should ever cherish with feelings so
xuriant and all-embracing! I had
extricably to associate the fascinations
e with his person. He was my husband
er of my adored children, whose beauty
e theme of every tongue that sought
e pleasure; and who resembled him

unloveable, cold, insolent, tyrannica
times when his whole character
sustain a sudden revolution—whe
tender, conciliating, gracious, to
reversed the entire impression of
completely as a burst of sunshine
effect of a previously dark and mel
scape. And this uncertainty of
rapid alternations of strong light
shadows—I fear, fix the attention
of women more rivetedly than t
qualities of more estimable characte
times my early love returned in all
like flame driven back for awhile b
finding less fuel and a more withe
sumed pathway, doubtless, on eac
—but still the same eager, absorb

whole nature yearned in all its depths to be loved—at least he loved no one better; had ardent, wild, impassioned feelings for no other, though not for me! The sorceress had not yet handed him her maddening cup—had not taught him to relish the flaming wines of the passions excited to delirium, which she knew so well how to mingle in a poisonous nectar! The asps of jealousy had not made my heart their brooding-hole; and, in brief, if I was not happy, at least I was not miserable! I had the consolation always of believing that at all events Scarlatt was proud of me, and gloried in being the husband of a woman who was his superior in the respects which he himself rated as the highest. I knew not then how much of carping envy and secret dissatisfaction lurked in the core of all this appreciation—that the station, riches, honours I procured for my husband, all became embittered to him by the very circumstance that it was I, and not himself, that had conferred them on him.

So it was, I think, most certainly! Scarlatt's failure in his own chosen and favourite paths of ambition, was too evident and apparent to escape the admission even of the fondest partiality.

events, he remained himself always
with the progress he made!—as i
most desired remained ever unachie
some great void yawned and ached in
which the sacrifice of whatever should
most valuable to him as a man could
to close!

It would have been difficult, h
anything to come up to the craving
always mocked the fruition of Scarl
with disappointment! But the degr
cess he obtained were certainly not s
content a less inordinate thirst! In
his efforts, and the zealous co-op
Luxmoor's really masterly talents, u
exerted in that behalf, my husband c
force himself into the eminence he

details, rhetorical language, and laborious, unswaying argumentation, could win for one. He had a weakness to affect the wittily sarcastic, for which natural talent had not qualified him: and no failure is so complete and conspicuous as in the handling of those light and brilliant weapons that attract admiration only by *finesse* of stroke, but claim so much attention by their preliminary glitter! He acquired no substantial or commanding influence in the party to which he had devoted himself. And he was obliged at last to content himself, as the reward of protracted services to it, with an elevation to the peerage in what might fairly be called my right rather than his own! The Crown—in other words, the minister of the day—refused to create two peerages in our family by elevating him, on my father's death, to the Upper House, with the possibility of my son's inheriting our ancient barony in his father's lifetime by my decease. But it consented to raise the title to an earldom in our joint favour, on condition of the surrender of the earlier Mauleverer patents. I was grieved to change the ancient barony of my house for a modern earldom; but my husband's heart was so set on the point, that unless I had been dis-

me! Scarlatt held it essential to h
we should make ourselves the centr
fashionable London coterie. We
of us very well adapted for success
I was too impatient of restraint
spoken, too proud—let me say it
—too *honest*, ever to succeed as th
a salon which was to combine so
tical objects. Scarlatt, on his p
condescending, too indefatigably s
much a man of forms and phras
popular as a leader of fashionable
amusement. We spent large sur
on grand entertainments, balls, con
matinées; but we did not bec
leaders of *ton*. And of this my
all the blame on me. I frightened

toys, or were at liberty to impute much of the weariness, repulse, and dissatisfaction that arose between us, to external sources of annoyance. A constant round of pleasures, or at least of dissipations, contributed to dizzy my sense of regret, in its giddy whirl. Scarlatt remained absorbed in his politics—and I had gradually grown reconciled to behold myself become of secondary importance even to schemes of puerile and personal ambition which almost excited my contempt, when my father's death occurred. This event produced an immediate and most unhappy addition to the elements of discord already lurking, like hidden adders, amid our feet.

Nothing could exceed Scarlatt's exasperation at finding himself excluded by Lord Mauleverer's precautions, and a thoroughly authentic testament, from that uncontrolled enjoyment of my inheritance, which the fact of there having been no kind of stipulations or settlements between us, he imagined had insured him!

The reasons for his conduct assigned by my father in the secret document I have mentioned, contributed largely to my husband's irritation. I do not accuse him, certainly, at this time of a deliberate plan to deprive me of the advantages

thus secured to me. But from that hour forward, undoubtedly—designedly or undesignedly—all his efforts, in our financial arrangements, tended in that direction.

Immediately after Lord Mauleverer's decease, I made the discovery that we were fearfully—almost unaccountably—involved in debt!

I knew, indeed, that the income my father allowed us—or rather myself, for his solicitors would take no acknowledgment but mine—must be inadequate to our expenditure. I knew that our rupture with Plas Newydd was so complete that we derived no assistance from the supposed wealth of our relatives there. And I knew, in conclusion, that we borrowed money; because I was often annoyed at the ill-omened, bearded presence of a gentleman of the name of Levi, who always politely watched while I added my signature to the little documents my husband handed me. But I had no suspicion of the rate we were running on at—that the terrible power of the multiplication table could eventually raise interest to more than principal! In short, I never dreamed that we owed fifty thousand pounds! But we did owe fifty thousand pounds! My misgivings were put to rest

by the confident manner in which Scarlatt slurred over the necessity of "doing a little shent per shent with the Orientals," only until he should obtain some high and lucrative office he was always expecting to be offered him in the ministries he served—or silenced, by the peevish and dogmatic style in which he reproved my attempts to understand the real condition of our affairs. "It was his business, and his business only—the man's business!—to provide the funds for a house: I had only to look to the expenditure!" Though this, by the by, I was permitted as little to superintend, under the plea that I was entirely ignorant on the subject, and so "carelessly extravagant" (which was not true), that I should ruin a Rothschild in a fortnight!

To do Scarlatt's system of management justice, it was not till after three or four years of profusion that we began to find funds fail, and to be annoyed by demands for the liquidation of the heavy debts incurred. And those he kept as much to himself as possible, until it became necessary to have my signature to the various put-offs contrived. But when the Mauleverer inheritance lapsed to us, it ceased to be any

longer feasible, or perhaps desirable, apparentl- to spare me my share in these vexations. was speedily brought to see the absolute nece- sity of getting rid of the liabilities we h- incurred. I had the annoyance, in fact, to fi- that the event which had now taken place h- been, throughout these transactions, assigned t my husband as the period of repayment.

Whereas it was not so easy for us to comp immediately with these demands. The landl property I inherited, being strictly entailed, course afforded only an annual income, whic considerable as it was, could only have told the course of years against so heavy an accum- lation of debt. And, on the other hand, m father had left the large personal property wh- descended to me so strictly tied up in the han- of trustees, that it was impossible to move the affair without their consent.

Of these trustees, Sir Vivian Ap Howel, wh continued abroad in India, was the principa my father's solicitors—Messrs. Sharples, Staple and Stopples—being joined with him in the administration. And this circumstance was a peculiar addition of irritation and exasperation to Scarlatt's feelings on the subject.

Moreover, in the secret document formerly alluded to, which he insisted on perusing, a reason for this particular selection was stated very galling to his pride. My father therein declared to me, that while his distrust of my husband's avidity remained unabated, a statement made to him by Mrs. Luxmoor had satisfied him that the only circumstance which could give him cause to doubt the prudence and honour of Sir Vivian, was explained so as to enhance his already very high opinion of his noble qualities! while at the same time it convinced him that my interests could not be placed in hands more resolute to maintain them! This could only allude to the scene at the Kerig y Drudion, in which Scarlatt seemed always to be conscious he had not played a part that redounded particularly to his credit.

It was, however, necessary to apply to Sir Vivian to obtain his consent to the application of a portion of the funds placed under his control to the payment of our debts. And this office—greatly against my will—was peremptorily deputed to me by my husband. He declared he would himself rather "rot in a jail" than become a suppliant to that "Sepoy fellow"

for leave, forsooth, to do what we liked with o
own! He was an old friend of mine, and f
the sake of "Auld lang syne," he dared sa
would still refuse nothing I might be pleased
ask! I need not enter into particulars: '
were not going to make him judge of the right
wrong, prudence or extravagance, in our affai
At that distance, it was only necessary S
Vivian should give his consent to what t
other trustees at home thought advisable. I
must have enough to do in his Indian satra
without mixing himself up in matters that
little concerned him!

I can truly aver, that during the seven yea
of Sir Vivian's now protracted absence in Ind
I had not wilfully once recalled him to min
But his extraordinary actions would not perm
him to be forgotten! All England had glow
with triumph and delight over an achieveme
by which, still almost a mere boy, he h
signalized his name on his first arrival in Indi
Coming upon the scene of operations in the mid
of the wildest hurry and danger of the Sikh wa
and shut up with a raw detachment of son
forty Europeans, in a lonely jungle fort, A
Howel there effectually resisted the attacks

a whole raging army of our swarthy enemies, and prevented the revolt of an entire province by his wonderful activity and courage. In the course of these services he formed one of the first of those great irregular corps on whose fidelity and valour it is possible our supremacy in the East will ultimately be found to depend. And at the head of this levy he took a part in all the sanguinary and glorious campaigns which re-established our prestige and empire, shaken to the centre by the disasters of the Affghan war. A part which kept him continually before the public eye, and accumulated honour on his name! His dash and impetuosity in battle had, indeed, acquired for him the title of the Indian Murat; but more than the glory of military achievements illustrated the sudden brightness of that young career! In the midst of the uproar, the province he had preserved was tossed to the youthful soldier to govern; and he displayed qualities in the settlement and administration of this stormy dependency, which almost induced a belief in England that he must be some statesman of ripe and solid experience, instead of one in the earliest years of manhood, who had only previously established

and at times with moistening eye
fore, I did not then stop to inquire,
now! But the struggle for our s
India had now for some time termi
names of Indian warriors ceased t
our insular ears. All that for a
period I had certainly known of Si
that his regiment returned to Euro
he remained in India, having acce
commission in the Company's ser
with an office in the administration
quered provinces, which almost reali
hood's dream of princely sway.
resolved to execute upon himself
of exile he had announced to Sophi
in our parting at Mauleverer!

I wrote the required letter of ex

—how, in common civility, avoid expressing a hope that his friends in England might yet have the satisfaction of welcoming him home to his native country? Scarlatt sneered at all this—but he admitted that my letter was well "calculated to serve the purpose in view!" And it was dispatched on its errand.

Very shortly after, the first really direct and open concussion between my husband and myself was produced by the circumstances relative to Sophia's legacy!

In our position at the time, so large an alienation from our inheritance could not but be a drawback of some consequence. Scarlatt railed at the act as one of the most senseless dotage—declared it could not be legally enforced—that the document was mere waste paper, and ought to be put in the fire! And into the fire, I think, he would willingly have consigned it—and would have troubled himself very little afterwards to fulfil its behests! But I was determined such injustice should not be perpetrated, and told him so in a manner that, possibly for the first time, let him into one of the secrets of my character—an inflexible resolution, wherever I imagined my honour concerned in maintain-

ing it! In vain did he urge his remonstrances—s in the form of a really terrible exposure of the—e magnitude of the debts we had incurred! In—n vain did he rail at my determination as a first—st fruit of the "infamous independence my father—r had secured me, with the sole hope and view—w of stirring everlasting wrangles between us!—!" Although, in fine, Scarlatt announced he would—ld resist payment of this absurd legacy, by lega—gal means in his power, I was not to be deterre—red from what I considered the right and honour—ur-able course. I was resolved that, so far as in—in me lay, Mrs. Luxmoor should have every facilit—lity to enjoy her rights.

It was some time, however, before I coul—uld discover how to make her even aware of them—m. Indeed I did not know by this time whethe—her Sophia was alive or dead! She had now dis—dis-appeared for a long interval from Paris, an—nd consequently from the notice of her husband's—'s pretended reporters. The executors of my—y father's will, to whom I had also confided the—e discharge of the legacy, could find no bette—r means of communicating with her than by advertisement in the newspapers—renewed from time to time, on failure. But the few persons

ophia's confidence in England, and she her- long considered these notices a trick of her band to discover her abode and resume his oyances. At last my name and address at uleverer Castle, which in the first instance I red to be kept out of sight, were added— she wrote to me at once. The communi- on just perused was Sophia's answer to a r from me containing a sufficiently laconic ouncement of the piece of good fortune—as had a right to consider it—that had fallen er.

Meanwhile several other circumstances com- d to render the wishes, or resolves—I knew well which to rate them—expressed in Mrs. moor's reply, distasteful to me.

ord Mauleverer and myself found our new ity more and more exposed to a contact l degrading circumstances of debt and ex- ure. We had in a manner taken refuge in les, from the persecutions of our creditors in n, until the result of our application to Sir ian could be known. And when this arrived, roduced a new series of disastrous complica- s and misfortunes, of a darker hue than any had yet encountered.

Sir Vivian's reply was very calm and business like—polite almost to formality in its tone, b perfectly decisive! He refused to consent the alienation I proposed until he had an opp tunity to satisfy himself that it was a pro course for him to pursue, with a view to h interests and to those of my *children!* T he proposed to do in person in the course o few months. He had affairs of his own settle in England; and as the rumour of a p sible Russian war held good, and India no lon offered a sphere of military activity, he had notion that he might find occupation in Euro either in the Queen's service again, or as volunteer to the Turks. But as I complain of present inconvenience (Scarlatt had forbid me to declare to what extent), Sir Vivian sta he should be most happy if I would accept temporary loan of a sum which was at his o immediate disposal. A short explanation f lowed, by which it appeared that the result the arbitration between the elder Mr. Suett, Plas Newydd, and himself, had assigned h the proprietorship of the Howel Mynydd min on condition of his accepting from the compa that worked them a certain royalty, in lieu of

other demands and arrears, and confirming to them a right to continue their operations. Having no immediate occasion for this money, and desiring it to accumulate so as to allow him eventually to realize his favourite plan of rebuilding Castell ap Howell, Sir Vivian added, he had acceded to Mr. Suett's request that he would suffer the greater part of the funds to remain with the company, receiving shares as acknowledgments, which in a short period would give him a most influential status in the proprietorship. And these shares, which by his latest correspondence with Mr. Suett he understood were at a very high premium, Sir Vivian now gave power to be disposed of, and full permission to me to devote the proceeds—which he imagined would be nearly fifteen thousand pounds—to the liquidation of any pressing demands there might be upon me. He gravely added that he should expect the same rate of interest as that he derived from the Howel Mynydd Company in the assignment of these shares, which to him was always made at four per cent. below their market value!

Scarlatt grumbled and railed prodigiously, alike at the delay and the interim offer, which

he designated as plainly announcing a spirit of "poking and interference in our affairs, and of the most puppyish patronage and presumption!" What use were fifteen thousand pounds to us? He supposed Sir Vivian thought the sum was something wonderful, taking a schoolboy's view of it, of course! Fifteen thousand pounds would buy a prodigious lot of lollipops, no doubt! The truth was, Scarlatt had no wish to have the causes of our heavy indebtedness too nicely looked into! It included (I subsequently found) all his own old university bills, to a really extraordinary amount—and numerous other items which did not court the light of analysis! He was himself conscious that his contractings displayed anything but the solid sense and skill in economical arrangements he always arrogated as his special characteristics! Luxmoor's name also figured among the discount transactions in a very embarrassing and inexplicable way! Though no doubt one of the largest items connected with it was to be ascribed to the expense of the law proceedings in his defence from the Llanhowel charges, and again in the baffling of his wife's suit in the Arches' Court.

I vindicated Sir Vivian's generous conduct—

well I might!—and a new source of discus-
on and irritation was opened between us. But
carlatt very speedily made up his mind to
wallow his bitterness, and accept the pecuniary
d thus offered. We had, indeed, very little
noice—so grievously pressed as we were!—
nd he besides formed the notion that Sir
Vivian would be engaged the more readily to
omply with our full desire, when it involved
ne means of repaying himself his advance! I
ope and believe Scarlatt could not in any
egree have suspected how it stood with his
ther in the case! But some unsuccessful ap-
ications he had made to him, unknown to me,
r pecuniary assistance, had violently irritated
m against his churlish senior! He resolved
on his measures, without deigning to consult
th John Thomas in the matter—and the
ppearance of Sir Vivian's shares in the market
a few days produced the most astounding ex-
sures and catastrophe! They turned out to
all *forged!*—and by the elder Suett!—and
at the affairs of the company were fallen into
retrievable disorder and ruin under his manage-
ent! All this came to light when John
Thomas himself, discovering that his post was

no longer tenable, abandoned everything in the utmost confusion, and fled to Australia!—not without suspicion of taking with him the means of making his advent in that colony favourably received, to the farther wronging of his numerous dupes.

This terrible disaster reacted still more uncomfortably than we had even reason to expect upon our own situation. Our creditors grew importunate to the last degree. Scarlatt declared peremptorily that he would not degrade himself, or suffer me, by becoming again a suppliant to that "jungle fellow" for leave to do what we liked with our own! And in this emergency it was suggested to him—I would fain believe it was not of his own crafty and rapacious device!—that we might raise money on our landed property, on the simple condition of my abandoning the exclusive right in it which English law capriciously affects to secure to women, in the inheritance at least of that description of property.

It was explained to me that it was only necessary for me to go before a commissioner appointed for the purpose, and make an acknowledgment that I voluntarily renounced my sepa-

rate rights in the landed property that had descended to me, to enable my husband to raise money on a mortgage of our united life-interest in the possession. It was *not* explained to me that I thereby conferred on him, for our joint lives, the sole usufruct, and all the powers of ownership, so far as they can be exercised over an entailed property! I was satisfied to know merely that my children's inheritance would not be at all endangered. I had even hopes that the necessary restriction of our income until we had paid off these encumbrances would also limit my husband's habits of ostentatious profusion. In short, I made the required declaration—and became from that moment, so far as regarded my twelve thousand pounds a year of landed property, a pauper and a dependent upon my husband and his Jews!

I prevailed upon him, however—I made it one of the conditions of my assent—that we should relinquish our house in town, and should retire to Mauleverer until we could place our affairs on some footing of retrieval.

Scarlatt was unwilling enough to consent to this. He had a great desire to launch out into yet greater extravagances, and air his new splen-

dours in a brilliant court light. But I was weary of London, and of the part he insisted on my playing in its turbulent vortex. Nature, as I have admitted, had not qualified me for a leader of fashion. To attain this position—which, after all, I could not!—I had been called upon for a long period to sacrifice all the real repose and enjoyment of life. But now I had grown exhausted even of the spirit of rivalry that pervades that outwardly tranquil and perfumed world! I had ceased to wear the bell in London society, after a success of two seasons, which I was said to owe to my outward gifts, in spite of my wonderful coldness and *hauteur*! Our house in reality ceased to be popular the moment it was suspected of being haunted by duns! Scarlatt was obliged to yield to my resolve on this point.

Yet, in spite of our embarrassments, I was surprised and grieved at his obstinate determination to interfere in no manner with the Plas Newydd business—to afford his mother and her daughter, who still remained there, no species of protection and assistance in the progress of the exposures that followed the ruin of the Howel Mynydd Company. Scarlatt seemed

anxious to dissassociate himself in every way from the connexion!—not without cause, so far as regarded his father's share in the transactions. But he persisted in laying a great deal of the blame on poor Mrs. Suett, for what he called, and perhaps justly, "her monstrous snobbish extravagance in everything." The rest he divided almost equally between his father and Sir Vivian Ap Howel! The former he railed at incessantly for being "such a clumsy rogue as he had proved himself!" and the latter he denounced as the immediate cause of the explosion! In the excess of his angry injustice, he did not even scruple to declare that he was satisfied it was the result of a regular plan on the part of Ap Howel to ruin his father and the family! And he more than insinuated Sir Vivian was aware that the shares assigned to him were forged, and that the whole transaction of the arbitration took place without the knowledge or consent of the company, whom his father pretended to represent in yielding to his absurd claims! Sir Vivian knew he had not in reality a shadow of support for them, but thought this would be a good means of establishing some presumptive right!

For my part, I visited Mrs. Suett with more constancy and even satisfaction than I had ever previously. I did all that lay in my power—she herself will not deny it—to console her in her misfortunes, and to assist her in the pecuniary difficulties she soon began to labour under in the midst of that splendour which myrmidons of the law had now seized upon, in the name, but entirely without the knowledge or consent of Sir Vivian. His lawyers—with proper activity on their part—had hastened to assert his position as proprietor and ground landlord of the entire Howel Mynydd property, and succeeded so far, in the first instance, as to debar for the time all other claims.

Of course these circumstances produced discussions and remonstrances between Scarlatt and myself, which did not conduce to our domestic tranquillity. But there were other occasions of difference. After the absolute surrender I had made of my separate rights in the landed property of my family, Scarlatt troubled himself less than ever to observe the degree of deference and cajolery he had previously deemed advisable in winning my consent to his wishes. He assumed daily more and more the tone of

master and controller! He had the most extravagant notions in the world of a husband's rights and supremacy! But they were not so easily carried into execution with me! My spirit was still high and unbroken! I was resolved never to become the meek, trampled slave my poor mother had been! And to a tyrant, also, so in every way my father's inferior! It really seemed to me, at times, as if Scarlatt had undertaken to revenge upon me the ignominy of the subserviency he had so long and vainly displayed towards Lord Mauleverer! Our discussions grew daily more and more significant of the progress of these contrary resolves—the one to be absolute lord and despot: the other never to submit to the yoke of the slavery intended to be imposed!

Scarlatt's absurd and worse behaviour, in his new position and rank, contributed to my annoyance and irritation. His excessive assumption of state and distance in his manners speedily excited ridicule and dislike, even among his new equals; among his late ones it was yet more peculiarly so. He was perfectly intoxicated with his new dignity, and insisted on being addressed as "my lord," on all public occasions, even by me!

The consequence was that he acquired the ti[illegible] of "My Lord Suett" in all directions, and w[illegible]a known in familar converse among the gentry o[illegible] the county by the sobriquet of "the Beggar o[illegible]n Horseback!" And not satisfied with maki[illegible]g us subjects of derision in this manner, Scarl[illegible]tt began to render us deservedly odious among o[illegible]r tenants and the poorer inhabitants of our ter- ritory, by the introduction of a variety of tyran[illegible]i- cal novelties, which he designated as impro[illegible]e- ments! These principally consisted in chang[illegible]g our small holdings into large ones, and clear[illegible]g the country of what he was pleased to style [illegible]s "surplus population." He replaced our nati[illegible]e Welsh farmers with men from Scotland a[illegible]d Yorkshire, exceedingly distasteful and alien in [illegible] their habits and ways to those they came t[illegible] settle among. So that indeed this new Lor[illegible] Mauleverer seemed to have formed a projec[illegible] clearing all the native-born off the land! H[illegible] course of proceedings excited universal disco[illegible] tent, and provoked from me many and vehem[illegible] remonstrances. But I found, too late, I h[illegible] abdicated all effectual power of protecting [illegible] people from this cruel harassment. I could [illegible] even save my old trees! Scarlatt cut down [illegible]

ancient wood of them, which he pretended obstructed the view,—an attempt to the same purpose having yet been the occasion of the last lawsuit between my father and him!

The heart-burnings and contention which all this produced may be imagined. But Scarlatt firmly held on his way; almost without consulting me at all, at last, in anything! And whenever he was not busy at some mischief of this sort, he seemed to be the victim of the most devouring ennui! I grew at last to have little delight or consolation in any of the environments of my position. My children were my only happiness —their innocent affection became my only resource and substitution for their father's finally scarcely concealed indifference and neglect.

CHAPTER III.

MORGANA'S HAUNT.

MATTERS were in this state between my husband and myself, when, after a long interval since my father's decease—probably seven or eight months—Sophia's reply to my communication reached me. On the points respecting her and her legacy, I had made the most resolute stand against Scarlatt's imperious will, and I had now the consequences to reflect upon!

I must acknowledge my solitary comments on this epistle educed by no means a pleasing train of recollections or anticipations in my mind.

The consciousness that the act of justice I had resolved to complete, produced, so direct and open a collision between my husband and myself, was certainly not softened to me by the reflection

t my father enforced it upon me as one of
titude due on my part to Sophia Luxmoor.
Of gratitude! For, he stated, it was she who
l first earnestly impressed upon him the ad-
ability of redeeming as much of his property
he could from the avidity of my husband to
separate enjoyment, in the form of personalty
l money, the law, as I had children, assigning
absolute administration of my landed pro-
ty to him.

This was an obligation (I felt it was one
w!) which it wounded a natural, if not a
dable pride, on my part, to owe to one who
l been in some sort my dependant!

It may be imagined that the general tone of
letter—the voluntary renunciation of that
ge bequest, which continued likely to occasion
open imbroglio with my husband, who per-
ted in his resolution to test the validity of the
at law—ought to have given me satisfac-
n.

But I do not know how it was!—the calm,
nost the disdainful magnanimity of the refusal,
uck me with a vague suspicion that some
eater, some more engulfing avidity, was opening
jaws, insatiable as the sea, beneath my steps!

The project of return announced, of so near an approach, above all, disquieted me. What could this woman, accustomed to the brilliant life of foreign capitals—to the freedom of societies unrestrained by the strict moralities and conventions of our national ideas—mean by desiring so earnestly to return to the seclusion of a remote Welsh province?

The exhaustion of heart and spirits, so elaborately paraded, perhaps suggested a reasonable explanation. But I felt a strange, inexplicable distrust of the statement: it was insisted upon with so much earnestness!

I had no confidence in Sophia's professed attachment to me now! What good had it ever done me? What evil not? I was not disarmed by her flattery and placability! Her thorough acquaintance with our position and affairs struck me as strange! *Earl*—not *baron*! Had she studied the gazette in our favour, then? What was her peculiar fancy to return and live so closely upon us, conscious, as I thought she ought to be, of the little probability that our once affectionate and familiar relations could ever be resumed? I had not forgotten the details given by my husband in the Luxmoor

trial of the disgraceful artifice and fascination of the attempts she had made to ensnare him at Plas Newydd. There were times even when I fancied traces of her influence yet lingered with him also! I have mentioned how openly he was wont to attribute his political disappointments to his want of a wife who, instead of attending to her own frivolous pleasures and objects, would devote herself as a helpmate in his projects of ambition. And he would often covertly rail at me for my non-possession of talents and industry which he would say almost redeemed Sophia's moral worthlessness!

I recalled the various circumstances that might dispose her to seek revenge on me—on us both, it is true! But revenge takes various means—is skilful in disguises. Did they not say that the Italian poisoners of the Tofana school could give their deadliest venom in a kiss?

Already I had learned to dread the remarkable mental powers of this woman, which she could devote, as it seemed to me, indifferently to good or evil, according to the circumstances or reigning impulse of the moment with her! But now that she announced herself as the authoress of the works presented to the world under the

name of "George Diamond," my fears indefinitely increased.

It was not many weeks since I, as well as most other persons addicted to the species of literature, had been reading a novel of this same mysterious writer, replete with all the most showy, recklessly defying, voluptuous, materialistic qualities of the godless intellect of the age, and of the author's peculiar style. I had read the works published under this pseudonym certainly, because it was a fashion which I blushed to be detected in following. But I had never liked them. I had admired indeed the glitter and glow of their warm and richly-coloured style; the passion and eloquence, the wit and brilliant gaiety occasionally exhibited in their uneven and bewildering variety of mood; even the not unfrequent elevation and beauty of the sentiments. But withal there was something diseased and rotten at the core of all these alluring externals, which I had always felt: the beauteous colours and golden shimmer on a stagnant and putrid pool! Original, daring, unconventional they were; but these works seemed to me to owe their popularity chiefly to their exact reflection of an age abounding in the

contrasts of a fretful and fevered outward activity, while at heart all is exhaustion and conviction of the nullity of all exalted and disinterested human striving. A period that perhaps precedes a revivification of the human race—the advent of a millennium—or a lapse into the dissolution and despair of a final catastrophe more complete than that gazed over by Noah from his ark! The malady of the age, in short ——unrest and dissatisfaction with all that is—breathed in every tone, mournful or gay, of those tumultuous and daring compositions. The spirit whose wild and turbid electricity animated them was one at visible war with the world and all its established laws and regulations—was engaged in the work of stimulating the passions, chained ragingly in the strong bands devised by society to restrain them, into a Promethean rebellion that should let Demogorgon loose—make of all human existence as dreary a waste, or battle-ground of as insane theories, as those in the writer's breast—hurl the gods themselves downward from their thrones! I was no longer what I had been, to relish this turbid stuff! I was a wife, a mother, on whom society had conferred most of its gifts and advantages—a baroness in

my own right and a countess in that of [redacted] husband, with large possessions of various kin[redacted] to preserve intact as the inheritance of my ch[redacted] dren. Of latter times my mind had taken a strong tinge of religious feeling. I had beco[redacted]e what is called a *Puseyite;* and George Diamon[redacted]'s writings had ever seemed to me removed by b[redacted]t fine distinctions from open deism and socialis[redacted].

I was astonished—but I was also dismayed—— I may add, disgusted and terror-stricken——to find that what I had barely tolerated as effusions of a warring and rebellious spirit in a man, were those of a woman's most unfeminine and unrespective genius! For the most carping criticism could not deny "George Diamond" was the possessor of talents fully entitled to that exalted designation.

I had never suspected the identity of Sophia with this literary phantom—for such it had continued in defiance of curiosity and conjecture, which, after many attempts, failed to assign a bodily presence and configuration to the name. Her first work was so different, inspired by so contrary a spirit, full of the worship of wealth and power, of the established in every form! The discovery now startled me into the convic-

ı that this had been written to please a class
l A MAN; and that as soon as Sophia spoke
· real sentiments, without dread or restraint,
y were almost diametrically the opposite of
se she had professed under the patronage of
ıuleverer Castle. How also was I now to
oncile the scornful, lurid, Mephistophelan
ety of this last work, "The British Bonze,"
h the writer's dismal and worn-out tone in
· letter to me?

I felt in my heart, as I have said, a kind of
ror of this woman—a conviction that her ap-
ıach would be, for me, that of an inimical and
ıst formidable power. Above all, I felt that
ould not bear she should become a witness of
ı change that had come over my relations
th my husband! I had a full belief in the
ılity of the animosity he had so long displayed
ainst her, and I thought my plan would be
consult him on the subject, in the expectation
ıt he would devise some means to prevent
phia from accomplishing her intention of be-
ning our neighbour.

I gave Scarlatt her letter to read; but it pro-
ced a very different result from what I had ex-
ted.

"Good heaven!" he exclaimed, as he perused it, "who can pretend, after this, to accuse this poor creature of mercenary views in anything she has ever done or can do? to give up a sum of ten thousand pounds without a struggle, without an effort to retain it; for she is quite aware of your fanciful principles and wonderful obstinacy, Lady Mauleverer! and, any way, she might have managed to make Luxmoor as great an annoyance to me as ever I made him to her! How very kindly and forgivingly she speaks of me, too; for, after all, I can't deny I gave her a terrible serving out that time! and she is quite right in all she says about what I ought to have been at this moment in the country! And *she* is quite capable of forming an opinion on the subject! What a devilish clever woman she must be if she really wrote those novels by George Diamond!—Why, I actually had them recommended to me, and have studied them as first-rate specimens of the sarcastic and brilliantly cutting style—a regular 'diamond' style, indeed! She is only wrong about the Luxmoors!" he concluded, nevertheless, with some visible degree of confusion; for during our town life, he had been a not unfrequent visitor at Lux-

or's house, and sometimes came away from
e "quiet man parties" that worthy occasionally
ve in it, in a state that marked some slight
dency to his friend's favourite style of con-
vialism!

"If we don't believe her, pray are we not to
lieve Mr. Luxmoor's statements of his wife's
isconduct in Paris?" I asked, with irritation.

"Oh, they are angry with one another. We
ght not to take any notice of what either of
em says! She had some cause, however, to
vexed with that able old devil; and it is
ain now she will never make it up with him.
ut, no doubt, the stories told about her in Paris
e all that vicious old hag, Le Crampon's, lies
d scandals! We can see very plainly how
e lived, and even how she kept up her dashing
tablishment there! George Diamond is one
the most popular, and deservedly popular, of
r modern novelists!"

"Men—some men, at least—may like such
itings; I don't!" I replied. "But what are
e to do, Lord Mauleverer, to keep this clever
eature from alighting among us?"

"Do? we can do nothing! and why should
e? What! after resigning such a thumping

legacy, could we, in common decency, try to prevent the poor woman from taking possession of that little, wretched, out-of-the-way hovel your grandfather called 'Morgana's Haunt,' out of some stupid old romance? And don't you see what excellent company she will be for us—for you? Have you forgotten how fond you used to be of it and her?"

"Have you forgotten how you shunned it, and why you thought you had cause?"

"Oh, that was when we were *at war*—secretly at war; but we both knew it! But now, I can tell you I shall be very glad indeed to have such good company within a half-hour's ramble of this great desolate jail of a castle!"

"Then you must write to invite Mrs. Luxmoor yourself! She will not credit such a change under less than your own hand and seal! And believe me, I will have nothing to do with inviting such a woman into my society or neighbourhood!"

"Certainly I will! Do you think to keep me still in the state of miserable vassalage I was obliged to preserve during your father's lifetime? Am I not entitled to some opinion as to who are proper visitors to my wife? You brought

Sophia to Mauleverer formerly against my will; and, upon my word, I think it is but a fair retaliation if *I* bring her now even against yours!"

So saying, he turned on his heel, and left the apartment, taking Sophia's letter with him.

In the space of one little year from that hour I was the most unhappy and betrayed of wives and women!

Was that whole dismal catastrophe, from its first torrent flow, to the edge of the precipice, the result of elaborate contrivance and craft? or of the downward, irresistible impulse of a series of fatalities and mistakes? Sometimes it seems to me the one, sometimes the other! The mystery constantly eludes my analysis! All I know is that the draught was poison and death; of what ingredients mixed I cannot yet clearly resolve.

I was given a short reprieve. We were obliged to go to town on business relating to our disordered affairs; and Sophia had established herself fully two months in her new acquisition before we returned to take up a permanent residence at Mauleverer.

Almost immediately after our arrival, Scarlatt declared that we ought, in common civility, to

make Mrs. Luxmoor—who was now become our nearest neighbour—a visit of welcome. I disdained to allow the repugnance I felt to appear. Besides, I thought that my demeanour in a personal interview would most convincingly satisfy Sophia that her empire of delusion was over with me! I wished to assure her also that her renunciation of the legacy was not desired, or finally accepted by me, though Scarlatt had thought proper to assent to it on his own part! In fine, I wished to satisfy myself ocularly, whether her report of her condition was founded in fact—whether or not I had reasons for the uneasy sentiments which I confess continued to haunt me!

What I had heard hitherto was of a somewhat reassuring nature, certainly. Sophia either affected to accept, or, in reality, accepted, my husband's answering her letter as an additional assurance of welcome on both our parts. And in her reply to the proffer of placing the villa in her immediate possession, she expressed great eagerness to receive it, and announced her determination to return to England at once. At the same time she declared her wish that she might be known on her arrival only as a "Miss Jones,"

renouncing her husband's name lest it should attract his notice, and that of a district where it was so odiously familiar. She was herself so altered in appearance, she added, that she did not fear to be recognised in the recluse manner of life to which she intended to dedicate herself! And now this Miss Jones, I heard on my arrival at the castle, appeared to be in reality a lady suffering under ill health and exceeding dejection of spirits, though with no very obvious bodily ailment. She had scarcely, it seemed, stirred out of the villa or its grounds since her arrival; and almost the only exception made in her plan of seclusion was in favour of my two children, who had been left at Mauleverer. She had encountered them accidentally, on some occasion, but had induced their nurses to permit them an occasional visit to her villa, under the pretext that I was a very dear and intimate friend of hers! There she always received them with the most engaging kindness and tenderness . . . So that the children, anxious always, children-like, for amusement and petting, had taken quite a particular fancy for her,—little Evelyn especially! In fact, they both overflowed with pretty, childish cackle about their new friend, and how pleasant

perly styled, was situated about a
from Mauleverer Castle, in the v
deep woods that hung on the ba
traversing the park of the domai
was a small mimic lake, formed
borders of which my grandfathe
keeper's lodge, which the more el
my father transformed into a mo
of architecture, in realization of
suitable residence for a fairy.
when the surrounding woods wer
the various foliage assembled o
shores of the lake, this spot app
likely place of resort for such a l
cially for the fantastic and illusive
legends of Arthur, the fairy pri
Thence it had acquired its name.

enclosed a considerable piece of ground in a sunk but not easily passed ha-ha fence, and cultivated the whole into a flower-garden, which was the admiration of all the numerous tourists and sight-seers who in the summer visited Mauleverer.

But of late years this charming little retreat had been terribly neglected. Sophia must have found everything in a very dilapidated, forlorn-looking state, for we left it so, having no time as yet to devote to any minor improvements on our property. And the short interval that had elapsed, and the season, which was autumn—or, perhaps her own listlessness and the tone of despondency she had to support—prevented her from making any effort at restoration. At least we found everything at Morgana's Haunt much in the same state of disorder and neglect as we had left it.

Quite against my notions of the proper style in which to pay the visit, but, by Scarlatt's imperative desire, we went in an open barouche, with quite a retinue of outriders and mounted grooms; all magnificent in a fine new livery he had himself planned for us, discarding the old, sober Pomeroy russet brown with white edgings,

him by his mother at Las Ve
tendency to the gorgeous was
peony in the sun! I told him
have procured a couple of trump
plete the imposing style of our ap

I shall not easily forget the ci
this interview. When we arrived
equipage, and thundering summo
only produced the slow attendanc
middle-aged Swiss woman, still
country costume, who opening i
for some moments, unable to co
meaning of so stately an advent
pidated residence.

Scarlatt impatiently explained i
was not understood. The poor
had a very honest, motherly, care
turned to me aghast, and decla

her mistress, was with Mossieur her doctor, from the village, feeling herself very much indisposed for the last few days. Worse than, helas! was but too usual with Ma'mzelle,—subject to the most deplorable accesses of weakness and of a depression *toute mortelle*. Yet, apparently struck with our magnificence, the good woman expressed her opinion that Ma'amzelle would be proud to pay her respects to milord and miladi as soon as possible, and invited us to enter.

I should gladly have availed myself of the opportunity to withdraw, but Scarlatt would not attend to my movement. He drew my arm abruptly in his, and followed the Swiss, at a rapid and eager step, along a walk the disordered and ravaged parterres on each side of which attracted his notice and dissatisfaction at once.—"Oh! we must have all this put right for her!" he kept saying. "This is too bad! Poor thing! she must think we have been shamefully careless of her comfort."

All the apartments of "Morgana's Haunt" were on the ground-floor. We were shown into one—a saloon—which during my father's time had been adorned with beautiful arabesque de-

signs, and tastefully furnished, also in an style. But it was roofed with a glass several of the panes in which were shatter admitted the weather. In consequen paintings on the walls were discolour decayed with mould and damp. The part of the furniture was gone: that remained was much dilapidated. And was the cuckoo cry—"Oh, we must see t this is quite shameful!"

I seated myself on a tattered divan in the windows. I felt agitated—very st agitated!—strangely altogether! It seemed to me as if I had, in a degree, s myself!—as if I once remembered to ha another person! So vividly brought int trast was my change of feeling towards by what was occurring!

The window looked out on the lak waters, indeed, usually rippled almost qui to the sloping walk just below. No They were shallow, through the choking springs that supplied the lake, and were overgrown with broad leaves of the lot turned of a dun-brown, and floating wit decayed sedges on the surface. And her

Scarlatt followed me with his cry—"We must have it cleared out, and put in decent order. Lady Mauleverer! Bless me! it is no wonder the poor woman is so low-spirited! We must try all we can to comfort her!"

He was saying these very words, when a door opened, and a figure, which I really scarcely could have recognized to be Sophia's, entered the apartment.

It was ill-dressed—very carelessly, in fact—in a loose French dressing-gown, of some dark coarse stuff, scarcely shaped at all, excepting that it was fastened by a cotton cord round the waist. She wore almost the costume of a béguine nun!—even a white linen hood, or sun-bonnet, or whatever the ugly thing might properly be called, almost as horrid as an old-fashioned countrywoman's nightcap — under which her hair—which I thought also slightly grizzled—lay in disordered masses—as if it had not been put in order for a fortnight! The figure thus ill robed seemed bent at the chest, as if with some internal weakness. And was all this deception and, so to speak, physical hypocrisy? I had much reason afterwards to think so. But if so, it must have been by a

brown circlets. But this light st
same time as full of an unexhaust
ness and devouring thirst for ex
the bright glow which instantly vi
seemed to me the hectic of passio
and disordered blood! Altogeth
me with the disgusting and terri
I beheld before me a courtezan,
triumph of her dreadful existence
quences, in premature disorganizat

Under this notion I really coul
words to reply to Sophia's eager
riously excited salutation. Noth
vinced, could exceed the frozen
repulse with which I checked her
and familiar outburst of emotion
overpowered sensibility. I had l
rate her effusions in this way

seemed to awaken in him the most vivid compassion and interest. In my life I had never heard him use accents so truly feeling and earnest as those in which he expressed his sorrow, after so long an absence, to see her return looking so ill—so very ill!

Mrs. Luxmoor evidently rallied with difficulty from the chill of my reception; but she replied after a short pause, with an appearance of indifference, "Nothing ailed her—but the need of a little rest! The kind medical man she had just been consulting had assured her so! But how exceedingly well his *lordship* was looking! and *Lady Mauleverer* (she laid a strange, lingering, thoughtful stress on the title) she had never seen her looking so perfectly! Lady Mauleverer had always promised to be one of the most beautiful women of her time; and she had kept that promise, as she always did all she made, by exceeding it!"

But I had grown insensible to the flatteries of Sophia, aware of their value. "George Diamond necessarily has an abundance of fine words always at command!" I observed drily.

Scarlatt eagerly hastened upon this to pronounce a somewhat laboured, but evidently sin-

—which undisguisedly wearied me yawning away—seemed not at a disconcert her.

"I thought you would like my Mauleverer," she said, smilingly, a sion. "There is a dash of personal in almost all my novels which i strangers, from the natural vitality impressions derived from actual sufferings. But to my friends a words which are sometimes nothing in general touch the key notes o varied strains. I am proud inde your lordship *still* in the number Mauleverer has, I suppose, forgott of the past for her to find a source anything that may recall it?"

"You are mistaken in that

tion most certainly, and brought a vivid flash of colour to Sophia's now again pallid and rather jaundiced complexion, that showed the glowing hues of her blood could yet be very readily revived!

She looked at him for an instant. The glance was a mere lightning of the eye, but fraught with what of inquiry, of recognising reminiscence, of subtle revivification of millions of half extinct associations? I could not tell, excepting by its effect upon my husband! He grew pale, arose, and, declaring that the vapours from the lake were quite overpowering, walked away for a few moments up and down the apartment to conceal his emotion.

"But for goodness' sake, Lady Mauleverer," said Sophia, turning to me, while the excitement rapidly faded from her own complexion, and left it of a really leaden-livid hue, "do not call me *Mrs. Luxmoor*. Unless you wish to bring that dreadful man upon me again, and drive me back to find a grave in a foreign soil, from which I hoped I had rescued this English dust of mine! I am *Miss Jones* now, I beseech you to remember! And I am very happy indeed in my spinsterhood," she continued, laughing, while

her eye again wandered towards Scarlatt's agitated, pacing figure with an expression I could not follow or analyse, "and only wonder how any woman can have the folly to wish to make herself the sport of the caprices and harshness always to be found in the best of men—let be the worst, on whom I happed."

"You have chosen your name better for the locality this time than when you came among us as Miss Sutcliffe," I said, I confess, rather pointedly.

"I did not *choose* my name then. Circumstances forced me to resume my father's, and I was sorry for it: I respected his name!" she replied, quite patiently. "However, I hope to retain this of Jones much longer: it is so common a one about here, no one will trouble to wonder who I can be. Certainly I never intend to resume my Luxmoor: therefore pray, pray, Lady Mauleverer, never sting my ears with its abhorred sound again! You see I have discarded the main link of my chain, the ring!—though it was so tight I had to have it filed off by a jeweller, and the dent is still left in my finger!"

"It was always *too narrow* for you, I sup-

pose?" I said, maliciously enough; but I wished her to see that I was no longer to be made her dupe.

Sophia looked at me with a very earnest, a wistful, even a plaintive and sorrowful expression, that I own rather touched me. No doubt her keen perception took in my sarcastic allusion instantly. Yet she answered as if she comprehended only the superficial meaning of the words. "It hurt my hand a great deal and often. But I never speak either of *him* or his fetters, when I can avoid it; and I find that thinking of them does me little good! Let us talk of something worth the expenditure of breath on—of your lovely children, Lady Mauleverer! What a source of delight and infinite consolation have they been to me in your absence! What a feast of innocence and artless sincerity of affection and kindness! Their pretty, prattling company has lightened the weight on my heart and mind better than the society of a score of the most brilliant wits or deepest sages that ever worried themselves and others with their vain, zigzag illuminations and researches!"

"I am very fond of my children myself! I mean, when I am at Mauleverer, I like to have

that I may still believe—it will scandalize you to hear me say so in God! Children are my only b lation, and of assurance, verily, i ence of the All-good, the All-re All-merciful!"

I was touched. I was even ve affected: this solemn utterance of so congenial to a mother's heart, pl ously against my engrafted preju was not pleased—on the contrary, perated, with reason—when Lor with imperious eagerness, anticipa and declared that *his children* as often and see Miss Jones, already loved so much—as often as But, meanwhile, he hoped that herself would be a constant visito

Mauleverer, *Miss Jones* is occupied in changing an old feudal castle into a Plas Newydd—at least internally! The outside defies him, as it has defied many a foe ere now!"

"Stuff, Lady Mauleverer! I will engage if Mrs. Lux——Miss Jones—will come and dine with us this day week, to have everything in preparation for as fine a banquet as if we expected the queen herself!"

Sophia glanced at us both—and that glance seemed to take in the whole meaning of the scene.

"I shall be most happy!" she said, with peculiar warmth, before I could further interpose.

"It is arranged then!" said Scarlatt, joyfully. "We must, in fact, do all we can to put you in spirits again, dear *Sophia*—for I would rather call you by that name than any strange one!" he said, interrupting himself with some confusion. "For example," he added, looking round, "we must turn this dreary place into a perfect little paradise for you. I will have your garden one immense nosegay, before I have done with it! And I'm sure the vapours of this nasty pond must be unwholesome for you, accustomed to

the clear translucency of the Swiss lakes! I will put workmen at it this very day."

"No, *my lord*, no!" and she dwelt with a kind of admiring internal echo on the sound, though to me her tone had a degree of mockery in it too! "Things are much better as they are: they *suit me* much better! Decay and ruin are my fitting emblems.—I must not, above all, have my ponds fished clear of my *drowned Nereids;* for I am convinced it is their long hair, twisted with flowers, that floats on this sluggish water, in the shape of those tangled weeds and lotuses!—Nereids, who have drowned themselves in their native element for unrequited love, Lord Mauleverer!"

She gave a long, languid, penetrating look at my husband, which I knew—which I almost felt in my own—glided like an invisible serpent through his frame! He shuddered—but it was with a pleasurable thrill, and grew—not flushed, as was his wont under more habitual emotion—but pale! very pale! I was irritated to excess—and foolish enough to let my irritation and even its cause be almost openly discerned! "Nereids, who have drowned themselves for unrequited love, then,—of Narcissus!—who was

too much in love with himself to have any to spare for the poor forlorn creatures!" I said, half-stifling with exasperation.

"What a fine match, in that case, he and the nymph, Echo, would have made! She listened to her own voice, and thought all nature around her answered!" replied Sophia, so sedately that it was impossible for me to resent the sarcasm I felt conveyed. But I arose abruptly—"We have made you rather a long visit, Miss Jones, in your *debilitated state*," I said, with a touch of scornful incredulity in my accents I could not disguise. "However, as Mrs. Suett used always to declare you were much handsomer than you allowed yourself to appear; let us hope that now you are not so ill as you seem!"

"I never was A BEAUTY, say Mrs. Suett what she may!" Sophia replied, with a satirical twist of the corner of her mouth. "But if ever I have been sorry on that account, it has not been for my own sake, but for the sake of the divers kind people who have done me the honour to like me in spite of my want of it!—However, I do wonder, I own, how I won Luxmoor, whose ideas of women were all so strictly physical!—Yet what a gain! Well, perhaps, dear, kind

Mrs. Suett was right," she added, with sudden animation; " at least, I will endeavour to prove her so!—I shall take more air and exercise—and, perhaps, I shall not always look such a dreadful fright!"

" A fright! I never saw you look more——more interesting!" said my husband, rather stammeringly; adding eagerly—" We have a pony-chaise in which the children sometimes drive out—I shall be delighted if you will accept it for your own accommodation awhile!"

" But I cannot drive."

" Oh, I could teach you in a lesson or two——and it is a very wide thing—there is plenty of room in it for Evelyn with us, and the boy rides on a little Shetland of his own now!" Scarlatt resumed with officious kindness.

" It would be pleasant indeed to chat over old times, and whirl along as if we could leave the past for ever behind us!" said Sophia, with another of those looks that vexed and perturbed me so inexpressibly. " But, what will Lady Mauleverer say?—Well, thank heaven!" she added, with her old smile, so full of finesse, mockery, and conscious power, " it is one of the privileges of old age and ugliness—not, perhaps,

the most desirable one—no longer to excite jealousy, even in the bosoms most open to the entrance of the yellow fiend!"

I laughed—not very pleasantly, I suppose. "Have you often excited jealousy, Sophia, in Paris?" I said.

She gazed at me; and I own I was struck for a moment with a feeling of remorse, and a conviction that I wronged her—that I had pierced her where her heart was still most susceptible! Her eyes, so large and wasted in their orbits, had in them all the yearning reproach and anguish which some poetising sportsmen, not endowed with the true huntsman obtuseness, have fancied they beheld in the eyes of the dying stag!

"Yes—among the women!" was, however, her quiet reply. "The women in Paris," she continued, with a brilliant heightening of her whole countenance, "are as jealous of intellectual success, as our own poor creatures are of the supremacy of their straight noses and blue, hard, unmeaning eyes!"

"Shall we go now, Lord Mauleverer?" I inquired, after a pause, during which I had been standing. He lingered.

over our decorator to consult wi
bring him to-morrow, if you will
Sophia!"

"This place belongs altogethe
moor! You have no right to
plans or notions on the subject!"
"And the ten thousand pounds,
means accept your renunciation
dying gift, Mrs. Luxmoor! A
Vivian ap Howel returns, I shall
power to pay it over to you; a
fail!"

"Is Sir Vivian expected home
land?" Sophia returned, with e
excited interest.

"I hope so! He seems to
latter communication to me. H
you are not, perhaps, aware!" I

how was I to know?" she replied, relapsing into a tone of profound sadness. "But be that how it may, dear Lady Mauleverer, I will never consent to receive what would in reality be the strongest of invitations for a resumption of Luxmoor's annoyances! So long as I am poor, he will not trouble me! If, therefore, you insist on my taking this legacy, be so good as to spare me the trouble, and pay it over at once to Monsieur and Madame Moorlux!"

"He is fast drinking himself to death, I should imagine: he drinks worse than ever, now!" said Scarlatt, not by any means in a tone of regret. "Last time I saw him, he was as bloated and purple in the face as a prize mangel-wurzel! Would you not be glad some fine morning, Sophia, if you heard that he was found dead in a gutter?"

A spasm, which she strove to make a smile, writhed over Sophia's lips at the words; it shone over her troubled features like a glare of sunlight over torn and flying thunder-clouds—and something resembling a dark tear welled from her eyes. "No!" she said, with singular bitterness; "for I think I should miss him so, if I had no one to *darken the universe for me!*

Mauleverer! And what a wea
I am! These tears are not for
concluded, placing her hand on
as if some sudden dart of pa
Then, taking my coldly extende
her own, she pressed it with con
exclaiming,

"Do you know, when I
even with *sudden joy*—I have
fearful pain where the wretch s
time! If he were to die—anythi
ful to happen to him—I believe
me too!" And she burst int
seeming grief and lamentation!

I drew my hand hastily a
away—this seemed to me such a
a useless piece of hypocritical pre

haps with vengeful reanimation! Leave me, my dear, kind friends, now! I shall rally best in the company of my *drowned Nereids*! I shall take care to be quite well again, my Lord, when I do myself the honour to accept your kind invitation!"

All the way home, I remember, there was a lively discussion between my husband and myself—I maintaining, and with perfect truth, that I had never seen anybody look so much older and spoilt in the face, in so short a time, as Sophia. He maintained the contrary. "Even after all the calamities she has undergone, she don't look worse, though she certainly is much thinner and paler! What pathos and appeal there are in that poor, sweet face of hers! What a worried, unhappy look she has! I am afraid that affair of the trial sunk deeper into her mind than one would have thought!"

"I suppose she did not like to have it known how she had made love to another man, to get rid of her husband!" I answered. "But I am sure I *hope*, for her own future sake, she is unhappy enough in her mind, if half the things people say of her are true!"

"They are *not*!" he replied, briefly and sternly.

"They were chiefly made *upon oath*, however!" was my response—in a similar key, I imagine!

CHAPTER IV.

THE STINGING OF THE STUNG.

I WILL freely admit that for a considerable time after our rejunction, Sophia made every possible effort to win back my former favour and affection. But whether in love or in hate, I am not easily induced to change. I saw too clearly what a dangerous creature she was! I distrusted her character and her motives. I could not perceive under what pretext she arrogated a position of equality with me; and I felt that after the degrading ordeals she had passed through, her society was not that which a woman of untainted honour and elevated station ought to seek. Nevertheless, I was obliged

she had formerly so perilously ab

I took care, however, to retair the distance and reserve whic future to establish in our relatio

I was not mollified—I was gusted—by the affectations of my husband's extraordinary at for a time Sophia seemed to assist in deluding me to the real projects to preserve. I saw sl the same time, to show her grateful to him—sometimes m tears at these marks of commise sibly of remorse! I could not her artifices, when I found th accepting Scarlatt's invitation to it became quite an absorbing c

might flow in—a darkness in the mantle of light!

She had the insulting folly—the absurd arrogance—to let me understand she perceived the discomfort of my relations with my husband, and to undertake to school me in the best manner of "retrieving his affections!"

Had I listened to her exhortations, I should speedily have reduced myself to become the mere echo, the shadow, the repetition, of a vain, antic-playing, arrogant, and peremptory man, who certainly considered himself my superior in every intellectual point, but whose supremacy was by no means so indisputable now with me, and who had lost for me in satiety even the poor homage men pay to personal distinctions in women!

I speedily silenced Sophia by her own example. What had all her patience—her submission—her CONDONATION, in fact, as they called it—done for her with Luxmoor? Had it "retrieved his heart?"—had he not uniformly preferred to her a set of the ugliest, coarsest rivals it had ever been my lot to contemplate as women?

On the final occasion of the discussion of these matters between us, Sophia answered,

slightly flushing up, though the habits of her youth had given her a great command over her feelings. "But when I appealed to Society, what did it answer me? That I was indissolubly that man's, and no other's! I thought so at the time you speak of, you know; and did I not carry my chain almost as lightly and unrattlingly as if it had been one of flowers? I annoyed the nerves of society as little as I could, I am sure, with the noise, though my shackles were of the heaviest kind, and of the coarsest metal; and yours are of gold, and might easily be wreathed with myrtles almost completely out of sight."

"You have deceived me once before with this fine magic of words!" I answered her in bitter rebuke. "What did you not teach me to expect in *that man* whom you have made my husband! and what is he?"

She avoided the direct accusation and impeachment in my look. Scarlatt had just gone out of the apartment in a huff, after an angry discussion between us as to whether a great clump of ancient elms, which intercepted the view between the castle and Haunt should be cut down. I had refused to have the park stripped

of some of its finest ornaments. Sophia affected also to coincide with me; but she took the other side, I was very well aware, with her eyes.

"Well," said she, with a painful smile, glancing back to see that the door was well closed, "what is he?"

I was violently irritated.

"Harsh, egotistical, arrogant!—a man of words, and not of ideas, nor of deeds either!—indifferent to everything but the gratification of his own vanity and exorbitant pretensions! Indifferent to me! Not a tender and loving father, but one who almost envies his own children the superiorities the blood mingled with his in their veins confers upon them! And this, this, this is all *your* work! You have yourself confessed it—vaunted it!"

"Is the fluid of two colours in the veins of those sweet, young creatures? Why, this is another of the things I would fain have remarked upon to you, Lady Mauleverer, if I might without offence. You surely cannot expect your husband to relish your frequently contemptuous and satirical allusions to his descent!"

"I do not! Does he care so much whether I relish what he *does?*"

"What does he do?" she returned, the colou stealing, in spite of her efforts to prevent it, ov her brows. "From all I hear, or can imagin Lord Mauleverer is at least one of the mo faithful of husbands?"

"He seems so; but, I suppose, the love o variety you once remarked as a characteristic o his generous sex will prove irresistible at last!"

"Let him find, then, variety in one!" she re turned earnestly.

"It is not so easy, Mrs. Luxmoor," I an swered, "to be all things to one man—as it is, perhaps, to be all things to all men! Suppose, now, for example," I continued, enjoying, I confess, her confusion at the allusion, "Lord Mauleverer should take a fancy to resume his old 'caprice' for you—I am afraid I should not find it easy to assume the exact form and fea tures necessary to enchant him in such a con juncture!"

Some strange emotion rose to the surface Sophia's usually placid and resigned countena as I spoke. But it grew calm and smo again, as a pool whose surface has closed o some loathly descent, as I looked at her.

"I was wrong," she said, after a pause

mpute so much to my own agency in bringing bout your union, in that moment of frenzied rritation. Scarlatt Suett would not have paid he least attention to my revelations at Plas Newydd, had you not been also the most beautiful young creature he had ever seen!"

"It required that, no doubt, to wean him from the fascinations in which he was involved!" I answered, I admit, with a sneer.

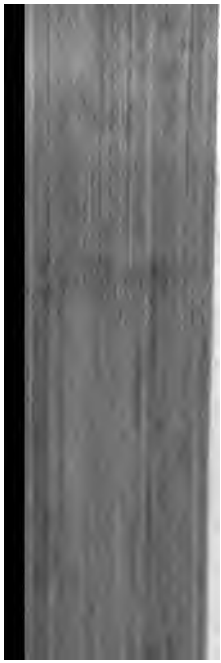
Her cheek flushed. "However lightly you may estimate that difficulty, dear Lady Mauleverer," she, however, made reply, "do not set ourself so vigorously to undo my work, or—r—you will succeed!"

"Is this a threat, Sophia?" I retorted, though very rarely now called her by her Christian me; and I believe I looked away from her rn countenance to my own, reflected in a ror before us, with a contemptuous challenge uld not disguise.

he laughed—but I remember now the hter was not infectious of mirth.

few days after this conversation, Mrs. Lux- volunteered acceptance of Lord Maule- s long-standing invitation to dinner.

uld not but see and feel that my husband



himself most assiduously to the c
suite of apartments he had had
greatly against my wish—and he
large circle among the country ge
he could have any hope would ac
tion—ostensibly to signify in an
ner his intention to become a resi
but really, as it seemed to me,
Luxmoor with a display of his
influence. And the list was sul
in order that no one might mee
thought, after so long a lapse
recognize her. Mrs. Suett and
were thus, of course, erased.

On her part, when she arrived
at the change that had taken pl
whole appearance. She seemed

fascinating pathos of languor and melancholy which heightened the charm of her singularly attractive and subduing smile. Paris had taught her the choicest arts of the toilette certainly, if only those comparatively harmless ones! Her hair was now arranged gracefully as that of a Grecian muse. Her dress was a perfect model of mingled elegance and brilliant piquancy of ornament—the variety of colour in it being as well matched or contrasted as in a bird of paradise. She wore a great quantity of jewels, too, though several ladies who were present—I knew not what to make of them!—thought they were paste. While, at the same time, the golden shimmer of her silk robe effectually relieved the sallowness into which her once very fair complexion had sunk, like the whiteness of a marble statue long exposed to the variations of the weather.

I gave this fine lady a very cold reception but she seemed to take no heed of it. Her manner to me was now as reserved and distant as my own had been to her from the first of our reunion. I have no doubt she came prepared and resolved to reassert that old empire of hers—that supremacy of mind and will—that irre-

sistible fascination, which in her was the substi— -ti-
tute for all the personal qualities in which she -the
could not hope to rival the great majority of the -be
women she encountered.

I could not myself but perceive that Sophi- -hia
gradually dethroned me from the eminence I
should have occupied, and became the centre of
attraction and attention to the whole compan- -y,
long before it was dissolved by the lateness of th- -he
hour. Lord Mauleverer's marked homage in- -n-
ducted her into this supremacy! I disdained, in
fact, to enter into rivalry with the ex-governe- -ss
of Plas Newydd, and probably did myself no
little damage in the opinion of our count- -ry
guests—by the reserve and silence I observe- -d,
which they mistook for haughtiness and disda- -n.
Where I was not *all*, I determined to be *nothi-* -g.
I had a right *to be all* under the roof of m- -y
ancestors, and with the man whom I had ma- -de
its lord!

And this skilled actress managed in a wond- -r-
ful manner to preserve her spell of melanch- -ly
and tearful sensibility—in connexion with d- -s-
plays of the most brilliant coquetry, wit, a- -nd
gaiety—a combination that produced the ind- -e-
finable, but inexpressibly tender and alluri- -g

effect ascribed by antiquity to the songs of the syrens, when with inebriating sweetness they lured their victims into the depths of a visible destruction.

It could not well escape my attention how much Scarlatt was enthralled by these artifices. Strangers noticed it even.

"Who is the lady Lord Mauleverer is so attentive to? Some very great foreign personage?" at least a dozen persons inquired of me.

I answered that it was a Miss Jones: and that was all I answered.

I make no doubt that from the very date of this festivity—if she had not come back with a formed intention to destroy me — Sophia fell upon her fiendish project of rivalling, and finally dispossessing me, in what I held most dear on earth.

With all her pretended elevation of ideas and sentiments, her mind was essentially plebeian. I have no doubt she was dazzled, allured by Lord Mauleverer's display, by the glitter of a title, by the foolish homage of that assemblage of country magnates, under the full influence of the tuft-hunting spirit that pervades all English society.

Much as she gave herself out to be exhauste of the passions and their agitations — beyon their stirring impulses—she was still *no La cretia*. And Scarlatt's always handsome an towering person, in spite of the absurd stateline he affected, was one on which the eye of such woman would rest with approbation. She love power—had thirsted all her life to attain it. Sh had to revenge on me numerous social and pe sonal superiorities which the possession of inte lectual gifts so paramount might induce her t look upon as so many strokes of the malice c fate, demanding retaliation. The instinctive re pulses to which I felt compelled to subject he doubtless quickened these sentiments — unt they darted finally all their stings into my soul Sophia was weary, certainly, of earning the lu urious appliances that had become necessar to her, by a toilsome taskwork of the pe from which no visible glory ever streamed an radiated back upon her. Misfortune corrupts and I have since known that while she s haughtily refused ten thousand pounds, she we in reality dependent on the chances of the publ cation she had just issued for the means of livel hood in her fairy bower.

It was not possible, as has been seen, long to conceal from so penetrating an observer, the development of all the profound uncongenialities between my husband and myself, which rendered our union so much worthier of a reversed designation!

But it did not follow, because I could not help discerning the numerous weaknesses, and even worse points, in my husband's character—I was calmly to see him become the victim of the artifices of a licentious and rapacious woman! Calmly surrender him, who had been the idol of a first absorbing passion, who was still my husband, the father of my children, to the meretricious allurements of such a rival!

But how was I to resist that torrent of fatality? How interpose to prevent the destruction I saw, from day to day, approaching me nearer and nearer, looming hourly into larger proportions, while I, like an Andromeda chained to her sea-rock, could only await, in breathless horror, the advance of the destroying thing?

It was thus indeed with me! I could not make myself a spectacle of jealousy—the derision and laughter of my own servants—of my

neighbours—of the world in general—by giving open expression to the ravening passion which ere long fastened on my heart! And what would it have availed to yield to its impulse and display at once my resentment and my impotence?

Yes, impotence! for ere long a true mistrust warned me Sophia had re-established an empire which my efforts to shake only cast into more solid and settled foundations!

All the time I had no outward cause of complaint afforded me! Yet who will say I had not reasonable cause for the loudest?

My husband's indifference to my society, always, of late, sufficiently obvious to myself, increased now to the observation and comment of perfect strangers. On the other hand, his resort to Mrs. Luxmoor's was as constant—and began to excite as much remark! He seemed to consider himself, now, too great a personage to be called upon to study a common attention to appearances! Although, since her first visit to the castle, I had done all in my power to impose the terms on which I desired we might thenceforth stand towards each other, the cordiality and *empressement* on her, Mrs. Lux-

moor's, side remained unabated. I left off returning her frequent calls even by the formality of a card or a ten minutes' alighting at her door; but it appeared to make no difference. She affected to dispense with the usual formulas of social intercourse, in consideration of the great superiority of my rank. She who, in her soul, was too proud to have owned an empress above her!—she accepted all my husband's invitations, rarely as I seconded them; and I had the satisfaction of presiding at fêtes which knew, in reality, to be given in honour of an sidious rival! I was not even at liberty to pulse, with the detestation I felt, the marks of fection and homage with which she pretended all occasions to approach me!

Her very looks, heightened by the artifices of toilette, to which she seemed now to devote self, improved daily, until, united with the inations of her conversation and manners, I elf came to the conclusion that Sophia was tiful! It was in vain that one saw with eyes that she was *not*—the effect remained ame—she *was* beautiful! The ill-painted arency, illumined by its gorgeous lamp, out a masterpiece of glorious art, that

:eeded the most vivid realization of natura[redacted]

:ects!

Lord Mauleverer was constantly at "Mo[redacted]
;ana's Haunt," as I have said, under vario[redacted]
pretexts; indifferent at last to my refusals [redacted]
accompany him. I told him I was weary of t[redacted]
society there, and he stared at me in amazeme[redacted]
Where was there anything like it in that part [redacted]
the world? I might as well say I disliked th
verdure, and flowers, and sparkling springs c
an oasis in the midst of a desert! Besides, h
had always business with Mrs. Luxmoor! Now
it was to consult her on the repairs and improve
ments necessary in her place; then, to watc
their progress; finally, when the villa was r
stored to more than all its original beauty a
comfort, they had literary affairs on which
spend the time in one another's comp
Scarlatt was writing a political pamphlet,
of the time, with which he assured n
should effect an important revolution in
opinion, on some question that interest
Where could he go for a better critic
viser, in everything that related to liter
position than to "George Diamond?"
could now discover, and acknowledge,

Luxmoor possessed quite a profound understanding in subjects the most removed from the comprehension of "ordinary women!" Even my self-opinioned husband confessed to have received many valuable hints—positive rays of illumination—from Mrs. Luxmoor's judgment and sagacity! In return, she paid him the subtle compliment of consulting him on her own writings: and so they worked on.

Other pretences failing, they had an inexhaustible one in my children. The poor things had grown so attached to this woman, who had spells of fascination for them also, that they were always asking to go and see her. What more natural than that their indulgent father should take them; and chat a little when he was there; and go again for them, and linger longer yet, when their hour or two of enjoyment was over?

Not satisfied with all this, they contrived, at last, that Sophia should undertake, almost regularly, the function of initiating little Evelyn into the first rudiments of her education—as if she delighted in returning thus lowly to her original pursuit—so weary as she had always shown herself of the office before she attained to dis-

tinction as a would-be teacher of mankind, and had exercised her talents on the loftiest world-influencing subjects!

I could perceive in all this, I thought, a formed design to deprive me also of my children's affections! I knew Sophia envied me their possession; and I did not believe in the extravagance of her pretended devotion to them! These were the conviction and the dread that finally overmastered my patience!

Of course, I remained ignorant of what might really occur during those endlessly prolonged visits—sanctioned as they seemed to be by the presence of my young children! But I knew that Scarlatt always returned to me from them full only of the praises of the fine intellect, the wit, the imagination Mrs. Luxmoor displayed; the charm she threw around the commonest association! Indeed he seemed to me, to praise these mental gifts in Sophia in disparagement of mine, though I never pretended to such. I was no retired governess, no popularity-hunting authoress!—I neither knew, nor desired to know, the subtlest intricacies of human thought and passion! But I desired to remain a mother and a wife—and in these positions, a true

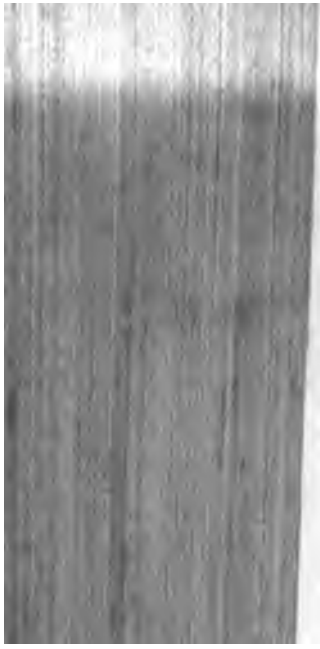
instinct warned me, Sophia was indefatigably undermining me!

Was I to draw no inferences from the most obvious signs? Was it nothing to mark with what zeal my husband devoted himself, in spite of her affected preference for the disorder and neglect in which she found it, to transforming Sophia's abode into a little terrestrial paradise? The constant presents he made her, "mere books and flowers," as he designated them! — his increasing coldness, and visible weariness in my society, varied only by fits of irascible defiance and exasperation — were all these to go for nothing? Could I avoid the most bitter speculations on the causes of the profound reveries to which Scarlatt became subject; the absorbed, absent, fitful train of his common conversation and demeanour?

It had not been so with him, when he professed to love me. But had not Sophia convinced me that he never had really loved me?

When she was under my own observation, what did I discern?

Displays of an affected sentimentality, a romantic sensibility, which, all I knew of her, satisfied me she mocked at in her secret heart.



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shadow of death

This evil magi
with her. Mrs.
Sophia had forme
rarest fascination
And it was part o
me that I had

respect from frenzy, save in its implicit ductility to an external will.

Her skill in flattering the inmost—even the most secret — vanities and hopes of her victims has been often exemplified. Scarlatt needed not the finer species of adulation: yet what could be more so than the assurance that she—herself a woman of genius—regarded him as one of the greatest intellects of his age; as more than her equal in everything? True, she established this belief in his mind by inferences only, by her submission to his taste, her consultations with him; indirect allusions, sibylline vaticinations, seemingly inspired by that freemasonry of mind whereby one superior spirit understands and welcomes the advent of another. She carried this species of flattery so far, as even in my presence repeatedly to lament that by becoming a peer, Scarlatt had deprived himself of the fitting arena, whence his talents might have swayed the councils of England and of the world!

As to the means by which she persuaded him that she *loved* him—had always loved him, had not her bondage to Luxmoor, and his own subsequent engagements with me, restrained the

impulses of her heart — she needed only the language of her deep, melancholy, haunting eyes, and the egregious vanity of the man himself, to effect the purpose!

Of course, I remembered also their early association, and its circumstances, and the natural suspicions engendered by that past were now verified by the probabilities that I had always been preferred only as the more lucrative prize!

And yet again, all the advantages that had won me this poor preference—my birth, my rank, my rich inheritance—seemed turned by some malignant spell into reasons of alienation against me. At least, my husband frequently, of late, reproached me with them as causes of an insupportable arrogance he professed to observe in my demeanour, and a desire to arraign all who approached me on imaginary offences I was pleased to impute to them, in order more insolently to exercise my pretended authority of lady paramount of the right and fitting in all things!

I could not deny the charm of Sophia's conversation, for it was still even with myself very great! There was such a variety in her ideas,

d in their expression; such an infinite play of tty mischief, of gaiety and paradox—shifting rapidly into every shade of jesting or senti- ent; at times, passing into flights of rare elo- ence and poetical elevation, that to follow, zzled without fatiguing the gaze of the imagi- tion. Sophia was never a bore, it must be mitted: and you might have spent a year th her without suspecting she was an authoress. rtly, no doubt, the result of her system of con- alment, but in greater measure of a certain brich-like indifference to her productions, ich she always asserted herself to feel, from a nviction that they fell short of her purposes d powers: thus exalting the opinion of her ent, as if it had some centre, not yet de- loped, of intensest glory and radiance.

Her unflagging gaiety in itself was a powerful raction for a man of slow and gloomy faculties e Scarlatt. It was rarely indeed that a tone reflection came over the conversation when phia was present. I know now that in soli- le nothing could exceed the dejection and n desperation of her moods. But abroad e was all laughter and carelessness. The rden of existence sat lighter on all who

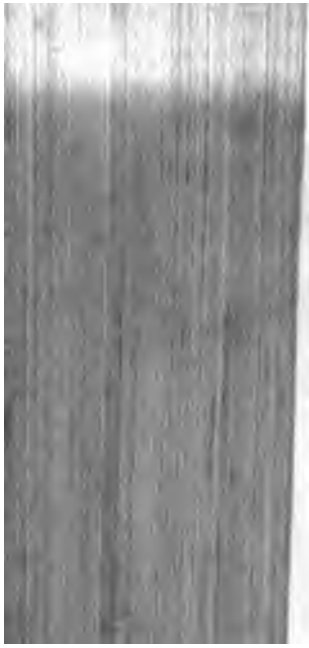
listened to her. She rarefied the atmosphere of thought with her own warmth, and it weighed less heavily on men's memories and apprehensions. The scenes of angry recrimination and discussion that now became frequent between my husband and myself, were brightened even to me by her arrivals, while at the same time I could not but remark, with bitterness, the effect she exercised in dispelling Scarlatt's morose and churlish reserve. His features on such occasions lighted up as if some unseen lamp had been brought into the room; while the relief afforded by these visits made the succeeding weariness and depression yet more emphatically remarkable.

Sophia was herself in full possession of the secrets of the tedium and dull lacunes of married life—and she was thoroughly cognisant of that deep discontent and weariness of the routine of common life seated in the hearts of so many men. Profoundly skilled in human nature, she knew that only the unattained excites their desires or their regrets. She detected with her intuitive glance, that Scarlatt, in the possession of all the objects of his early ambition, found yet that he had not achieved happiness. And

she managed, by an inexplicable sorcery, to persuade him that this priceless essence of all success was in her bestowal.

It may be thought that I am labouring at an apology for the conduct which, as the only means of counteraction placed in my power, I ultimately adopted. But not so: I appeal to all mothers and wives if I was not justified in the effort I made, or was at last driven into, to rid myself of this portentous presence!

I found it impossible to remove the inauspicious shadow by fairer means. My coldness and distance was of no use; and I could not find any way to provoke the "Fairy of Morgana's Haunt," as Lord Mauleverer was now pleased to style her, into any direct collision. She enjoyed her vengeful superiority too calmly! She would understand no inuendo—accept no invitations to a decisive explanation! She only retaliated upon me from remote and unassailable points of retreat, whence she could launch her poisoned arrows, seemingly dipped in honey, without danger of the wind drifting them back upon herself! Meanwhile, that unworn endurance and patience confirmed my dread, and desire to bring matters to some speedy issue. I



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—designs wh
with us were

CHAPTER V.

A SQUARE DUEL!

I KNEW there was but one person in the world of whom Sophia stood in awe, and who possessed the means, if not very indisputably the right, of restraining the harmful overflows of those choked channels of a woman's natural existence!

I felt convinced that if Luxmoor knew she was in England, and in the enjoyment of means of which he could pillage her by his marital authority, he would immediately resume annoyances against his wife that would probably compel her once more to return to her continental seclusion!—at all events, to leave a spot where she was recognised!

But I did not put this lever in actio
my own provocations had increased to a
that rendered it impossible for me to r
longer under the burden!

The dread of Sophia's designs grew up
hourly. And though unable to pass the
lines of defensive offence she had drawn
herself, I had unhappily succeeded but t
in provoking the anger and impatience of m
band. Yet it seemed I had nothing tangibl
which to accuse or upbraid him! The rea
of our dissensions was hardly ever even a
to! And no doubt it may have seemed ver
rageous, almost irrational, to find fault wit
for a few harmless civilities to a neighbour
neighbour in such a really pitiable conditi
health and spirits—and whom, my hu
now confessed, *we* had much reason to rep
ourselves with having brought to so forl
pass! For *he*, too, could now perceiv
injustice, the uncivilised cruelty, of cha
such a woman to such a man as Luxmoo
life, merely because, in the unguarded inno
and credulity of youth, and of a trustful
perament, she had slipped into his clutches

I was still, happily or unhappily, as I

been in my girlhood, a person of high and unbroken spirit—perhaps, as I have been reproached, of too haughty and exacting a temper! I had exalted, though I do not suppose, exaggerated notions, of my rights as a wife and a mother—as the source of all the prosperity and honours that had befallen Scarlatt Suett! My keen sense of wrong, of indignity, of resentment, did not always stop, I am afraid, to measure its language, moderate the sting of a retort, withdraw the poison of a sneer!

Whereas to encounter me was a man of revengeful, domineering, imperative character—who could do nothing wrong in his own eyes, and who imagined that whatever pleased himself ought necessarily to please others. And Scarlatt owed me no gratitude for his success in life—he imputed it entirely to his own talents and labour! So if I too often adopted the style of the exacting heiress, he met me with a still worse version of the imperious husband! But with so ample a field of retaliation open to me, in his own birth and family, was I tamely to endure those constant sneers at mine—those declarations that I inherited all the insolence and tyrannical "assumption" of my Norman

tocratic qualities he imputed t
crimes?

But what completed the mea
tation, was the conviction that
that Sophia was engaged in the
ing my children's affections from

I could perceive, and by nc
how they grew at last to prefer
gana's Haunt to any other recre
be proposed to them! How the
upon an afternoon with Mama,
room with the pictures," as the
of possible contingencies! T
prating to me how good "Miss
them; what beautiful flowers
fine stories of fairies, and knig
she told them! Finally, little

when he was a man, to put on one of the suits of armour in the gallery, and go about killing all the giants that would not let "Miss Jones" come out of her garden to the fair at Llanhowel, where there were tumblers, and Punch and Judy and all, because his nurse had seen them, and he had proposed to the "fairy" to take him thither, and she could not for fear of them!

I bore all this as long as I could. But it was not in human nature to endure it always. I determined to resume my children! They at least were mine! I forbade their nurses to take them to Morgana's Haunt any more without my special permission. And all their little holidays I endeavoured to appropriate to myself. But I soon found, to my inexpressible sorrow, that I had not the same faculty of enthralling and amusing even those childish fancies! Their mother had become less to them than the wicked Scheherazade, who made her own intellect infantine to build those dwarf palaces of splendour for their young imaginations to revel in!

Lord Mauleverer speedily remarked the course of conduct I had adopted, and declared his dissatisfaction with it! Sophia's name, secretly animating as it did our whole domestic dissen-

sion, came openly into the arena on this occasion. He stated that the company of the children was "poor Mrs. Luxmoor's" chief consolation; that she complained and wondered at their absence; that she was forming their childish minds quite surprisingly; and, finally, that he could see no meaning in my order prohibiting their visits to the Haunt!

I answered, much exasperated—Did he think *I* needed no consolation? The children were mine: *I* was their mother! I would account to no one for my conduct respecting them! But no one save himself surely would ask a reason why I would not suffer my daughter, at all events, to be exposed to the corrupting influence of a woman whose character he himself had done his best to parade before the world! and whose writings continued to attest, that all that was right in the world, and by the consent of mankind, was wrong with her!

Scarlatt's reply was remarkable. "Since the event you allude to, I have had reason to think I was mistaken in almost all my opinions at the time respecting Mrs. Luxmoor. Her husband's atrocious calumnies entirely misled me! As to Mrs. Luxmoor's writings, it is quite certain the

descendants of Norman pillagers and adventurers are not quite deified in her pages! But, perhaps, if the world had treated you as ill as it has treated her, Lady Mauleverer, you would give as unfavourable a report of your pilgrimage through it. As to any consolation *you* may need, you bestow so little among those around you, that I could not imagine you were yourself in such great scarcity of the article! But you are very much mistaken, Lady Mauleverer, in imagining that, because you are the mother of Herbert and Evelyn Pomeroy, you have the disposal of their education and futurity! It so happens I am their father; and the law of England gives to the father of minors their absolute control and disposal! And I shall use my rights to restore my children at once to their favourite and instructive visits at 'Morgana's Haunt!'"

Lord Mauleverer kept his word. I found myself powerless, without open scandal—and, perhaps, with it—to resist his behests! And it was then, for the first time, suggested to me, by the mention of Sophia's husband in the discussion, and a burning conviction of the necessity of ridding myself of this woman's evil and

masterful presence, that a means to effect the purpose existed!

In my now matured indignation and disgust, I thought that she indeed deserved to feel the authority of a husband, who stimulated mine to exert his so ruthlessly!

I conjectured pretty certainly that, if I revealed to Mrs. Suett, my husband's mother, who this *Miss Jones* in reality was—which had already strongly excited her curiosity—she would soon spread the tidings in a manner that would infallibly come to the notice of Luxmoor. Up to the time of the bankruptcy, Madame Le Crampon, I found, occasionally wrote strenuous begging-letters to Plas Newydd.

This was a channel of communication it could not be difficult to reopen!

I now not whether I was to blame in executing this resolution. It was attended with the most disastrous consequences to myself, and so far I may be said to have had a direct agency in my own catastrophe.

Mrs. Suett still resided at Plas Newydd, by permission of the principal creditor of the Mynydd Howel company, which turned out to be Sir Vivian Ap Howel! His lawyers, who had

all along unwillingly coincided in the plan of arbitration, finding that the agreement entered into with the elder Suett was quite unauthorized by the mining company he pretended to represent, instantly entered a claim on his behalf, which constituted him at once the chief creditor of the estate. The Court of Chancery admitted Sir Vivian's claim, as original proprietor of the Mynydd Howel, in default of any opposition to it on the part of the company, which was believed to be too completely ruined and dispersed to take upon itself the chances of a litigation weighty opinions were shown to have pronounced untenable on several previous occasions. These active lawyers were enabled, by another adjudication, to seize and retain possession of all the buildings on the estate, in discharge of the lord of the manor's long overdue and accumulated royalties. A fortunate circumstance for Mrs. Suett; for Sir Vivian—I found on this visit—had sent word she was not to be molested there until he had time to arrive and make some equitable arrangement for the disposal of the property.

Mrs. Suett's whole conversation was in praise of the "young 'ero of Lahore," as she called

Sir Vivian—and, indeed, as he was generally called, in an aspirated form—from one of his most remarkable achievements in the course of the campaigns in that province. She was busy with great preparations for his reception at Plas Newydd, where she seemed to make certain she should now prevail upon him to take up his quarters, in preference to the "musty, old, topsy-turvy, blacking-bottle tower" on the hill! And she more than intimated to me her expectation, in that case, of bringing about her former favourite plan of an union between her daughter, Bronwen, and Sir Vivian. As Bronwen had enlarged into quite as beautiful a wax figure of a woman as she had been of a child, I thought I might conscientiously flatter this hope—and I did so. But never did wonder and vexation surpass Mrs. Suett's when I came to my own affair, and communicated—apparently quite accidentally—who "my queer neighbour at that flower-place thing" was! And to the strengthening of my own dismayed convictions she jumped at once to the conclusion that "the creature would be at all her old games worse than ever again, now that Scarlatt was a great lord, and so well off in all respects," if ever I let

him see her again! "No matter for the row between them once! You never knew half the truth of that story, Lady Mauleverer! I didn't myself, until you all made off together—and it was supposed to be her and him, you know! The servants told me then: such goings on in a respectable house, by a private woman, I never heard of! And she married, all the time! So it's no security that she is still fastened to that Luxmoor! She made one of the deadliest sets at Scarlatt ever was, and he was more than half hooked, I'm convinced, when you came and got him off!"

And Mrs. Suett told me a whole string of stories—certainly only gossip of servants and similar persons—but which irritated me to a degree that I made no secret of the reasons I had to suspect Mrs. Luxmoor *was* resuming "her old tricks," as my mother-in-law phrased it—concluding that I should be very glad indeed if she could be removed out of that part of the country, without my seeming to have anything to do in the matter! I would not for the world, I said, and most truly said, have it reported, or believed, that I could suspect, or had any reason to suspect, such a

person of possessing any undue influence over my husband!

Mrs. Suett's ideas instantly turned in the direction I expected and wished. "Quite right, my dear, quite right!—Jealous of such a thing as that? I should as soon be jealous of an old broomstick! It would be much more proper and reputable, I'm sure, for her to live with her own husband than to go about the world trying to get other people's from them! That's the way she manages it, I have not the least doubt! —Why, I am all but certain she was once after John Thomas himself! and, perhaps, if she knew where he was to be found in Australia now, she would be for taking advantage of his unprotected situation! But just you look if I don't put a drag on her wheel! I won't say *how*—but if Luxmoor is so terribly in want of money, I don't see why his wife should be lolling in the lap of luxury here—at the expense of my son, too, from what you say, who cannot afford me a twenty pound note to pay off an impudent footman!"

My object was gained; and yet it was surprising with what a guilty and uncomfortable feeling—a feeling that I had committed a cruel

and oppressive act—a breach of confidence—I returned to Mauleverer. I repented of my revenge before I had secured it, and wished that my project might prove inoperative, long before I drove in at the castle gates on my return!

A piece of news awaited me on my arrival that was not calculated to restore my equanimity. I found Lord Mauleverer just returned home also from Morgana's Haunt, where he had been to bring back Evelyn from her now daily resort. I saw at once that he looked excessively annoyed —and he explained the cause to me with very little preparation, just as I was apprehending that he suspected some purport of my visit to Plas Newydd. Sir Vivian Ap Howel had arrived home from India; had been a day or two at his old ruin without letting any one but his dependants there know of his return, and Lord Mauleverer had found him that very day at Morgana's Haunt, paying his first visit to any one in Wales to *Mrs. Luxmoor!* How he had discovered her he could not dream, or what on earth the fellow wanted with her!—It was quite inconceivable why he had made his first visit to her!—He did not know they were such particular friends: were they? Did *I* know?

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such a mustachio'd
Scarlatt; and I was
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"for he is a shag
fellow than ever!—
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—In fact, his hair
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But, talking of jealo
tinence to state that,
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honour of waiting

Vivian here! This house is, I should think, sufficiently mine to receive my father's and my own kindest and truest friend in it!"

"Certainly, Lady Mauleverer, you have the absolute disposal of the *delight of your society!* —— But, you must excuse me if I decline to have anything to do with such an insufferable, interfering, glaring-eyed personage, on anything whatever relating to your late father's absurd will! And I am not very desirous of closer intercourse of any kind with Sir Vivian Ap Howel! But I suppose you will want to be tremendously civil to him till we can get the money to redeem the mortgage."

"I shall be guided in everything respecting that by Sir Vivian's advice! Thank God," I said, with tears starting to my eyes, "I have now at least one true friend in the world to apply to for disinterested counsel and assistance in my need!"

"You were always a great admirer of Sir Vivian's, I believe, Lady Mauleverer!" said my husband; and stretching his arms, and giving a yawn, he sauntered carelessly out of the apartment.

On the very next day, greatly to my surprise,

and very little to my satisfaction, Mrs. Luxmoor —who had become quite an expert whip, under my husband's tuition—drove Sir Vivian over to Mauleverer, in my children's pony-chaise, to which she now seemed to have established a prescriptive right!

I do not deny that I was internally agitated, almost beyond my own control, when these two names were announced—and in conjunction! And I was given very little time to rally, before Mrs. Luxmoor made an impetuous entrée into the drawing-room—almost, as it seemed to me dragging in Sir Vivian after her, by the arm! I could perceive at once, from the now unusual cordiality and effusion of her manner, that she wished him to infer we were on the most familiar and affectionate terms. "I am bringing this bashful hero to see you, Lady Mauleverer literally almost by force of arms! You must be more formidable than an Indian army with all its elephants—you positively frighten him!"

I was speechless for a moment, with an emotion I could not suppress, and would not betray But seeing them together, and listening to the treacherous cordiality of those tones, recollections

thronged in upon me which vanquished all my efforts—and a gush of tears came to my eyes, as I exclaimed—"Oh, how glad, how very glad I am to see you again, Sir Vivian!—Have you, indeed, heard me murmuring over the bitter sea, a thousand times of late—'O beth y wnaf fi?'"

Vivian was looking as pale as his now bronzed complexion permitted; but as I spoke these words—unforgotten, doubtless, by himself also ——a flash like fire broke over all his lineaments; and he replied, "Indeed, indeed, Lady Mauleverer! I have come home quite as much on your account as on my own!—to take care that your too lavish generosity and confidence . . . do not betray you into a forgetfulness of what is due, at all events, to the interests of your children!"

"Nay, now, Sir Vivian! let me tell the truth of you. You have come home because you are tired of a two years' rest from glory; and thinking we good people of Europe are likely to be in want of a great general shortly, young enough to relish the charms of a campaign in the Balkan, you allow us the opportunity of selecting one by the light of a reputation

already all ablaze in the lands where the sun rises!"

"Mrs. Luxmoor is as good as ever—always *too* good!" said Sir Vivian, with that well-remembered satirically playful smile of his. "But I *had* some notion, certainly, of a campaign or so on the Danube—just to keep myself from rusting quite—I hate to be idle! I don't suppose, however, people here take much notice of our doings in India; so I don't feel so very famous yet as to expect the Turks to send a deputation to secure my services; and the allies seem to intend to confine their assistance to palaver! Indeed I know I ought to have some better apology for coming back at all, dear Lady Mauleverer!" he continued, with his quaint, laughingly-melancholy expression. "But as there really was not the least chance of getting knocked in the head in India, I am not much to blame in taking Glamorgan on my way to Constantinople, where there is a very good one——having it in view to try and introduce some order into the distraction of affairs at Plas Newydd!"

I followed a natural, an irresistible movement of my feelings, when I extended my hand again to Sir Vivian, and almost wrung his in both

mine for several moments! I felt that a loyal, and brave, and devoted friend was restored to me in the very depths of my desolation!

"You see you owe no apology to Lady Mauleverer, at all events, for coming back to see your friends once in eight or nine years, Sir Vivian!" said Sophia. "As for me, I understand my age too well to wonder at anything that happens in it—and you are its very epitome!—full of weariness, and yet insatiably athirst for excitement and movement! You might be chained by a word or a look for ever to this spot—or dispatched on a voyage of discovery to the skies, on a stream of electricity, at an hour's notice!"

"Oh, indeed, you owe me no apology, Sir Vivian!" I said, with one or two tearless sobs I could not suppress. "I am very, very glad to have once more a true friend near me!"

His fine, sensitive features thrilled all over with emotion. "I should not have ventured so abruptly, but Mrs. Luxmoor brought me, almost by force," he replied, with agitation. "She assured me so earnestly I should be welcome—else I should have awaited your summons. . . . I saw Lord Mauleverer yesterday!"

"And you paid your first visit to Mrs. Luxmoor, Sir Vivian! How did you discover her under the name? Do you still correspond?" I said, striving to put on an appearance of gaiety and indifference.

"No, I paid a first visit to Sir Vivian!—that is, I did not know he was at Ap Howel but I am fond of ruins—I am one myself!—and had strolled thither quite unconsciously, when I encountered a pair of eyes peering over an old battlement, which it is not very easy to forget!"

"If associated with the vivid reminiscences I have always understood to hallow Castell Ap Howel for you!" I could not help saying: and Sophia flushed darkly as she met my scornful glance.

"We are both of us very suitable ornaments for a ruin. I am as *blasé* as Mrs. Luxmoor can possibly pretend to be!" said Vivian, with his old, quick-edged laugh.

She never forgave me that provoked, or him that gave that laugh, I am convinced!

"I have a right to feel *blasée*. I am growing the oldest of all possible things—an *old woman!* You told *me* frankly enough,

Sir Vivian, yesterday, what time had been doing for me externally! Now tell me what it has done for Lady Mauleverer?" inquired Sophia; and she expected the answer with evident attention.

He turned his brilliant eye upon me without an attempt to dissemble—perhaps without being conscious—of the excess of admiration expressed in it, as he answered, "Oh, she is not improved at all, Mrs. Luxmoor! Nothing could improve Lady Mauleverer! She is only what she has always been, and must always be—perfection!"

"Very far from that to some people, Sir Vivian, whose opinions have changed possibly as much below a true estimate as yours are above me!" I replied, with a throb of pleasure, I deny ot, and the more satisfaction in this incense fered to my vanity, that I saw Sophia looked an- yed. I glanced at Sir Vivian at the same time almost for the first time since he had entered room. Into what a fine, though still maced and prematurely worn countenance his l developed! The years he had passed in the ist of strenuous thought and action—in the mand of men and the presence of difficulties l dangers—had produced the brightest stamp

it was all well between herself
she deserved the premium he
— and yet, I doubt not, seri
her, when we three parted, und
circumstances, years previously
determined not to be made a c
this instance—her cat's paw, in
gined I already discovered, in
with Ap Howel, signs of not
dentalness as must have beer
her statements. When the vis
long as Mrs. Luxmoor seemed
able, Sir Vivian asked me wha
convenient for me to explain my
to his trusteeship?—and I ans
he was *alone* for a couple of ho
day, if he could do me the pleas

verer might not expect an addition to his family party to-day—and I have already taken the liberty to invite myself to dine with Mrs. Luxmoor!"

"Oh, I don't suppose Lord Mauleverer will be at home to dinner to-day," I said, aware that he would take care to be absent; and I own that I did not relish the prospect of this artful woman having the power to make all manner of first impressions on my only remaining friend, in the intimacy of a convivial *tête-à-tête*.

"If it is so, dear Lady Mauleverer," said Sophia, "you have never yet honoured me with your company at the Haunt (the most deserted, unfrequented *Haunt* in the world, by the by!)—but as I have things in some little order now at last, will you not also dine with *us* to-day?"

I thought by her tone she did not wish me to accept the invitation. I considered it would be a fitting retaliation on Lord Mauleverer for the many lonely repasts to which of late he had abandoned me, scarcely taking the trouble to send a groom or a gamekeeper home with an apology. "Well, Mrs. Luxmoor," I said, after a moment's deliberation, "I really will *honour* you, as you are pleased to style it, though per-

haps not to think it—why should you?—wit my company to-day! I will even go back wi you in your pony chaise! I suppose I can s where Evelyn is usually planted on those charn ing drives that have done you so much goo and restored you to every appearance of heal —so *suddenly!*"

The tone of pique in which I spoke probab struck Sir Vivian. He looked at me with startled expression—and then at Sophia, wi one of profound and watchful interest. But made no observation: neither did Sophia. A thus the matter was arranged.

I remember that as we went, Sophia and sitting in the front seat, side by side, she drivi —she whispered to me, with great earnestne to be so very good as not to make any allusi before Ap Howel to the circumstances of t ecclesiastical suit. "I am so shamefully beda bled in it with the foul mire of the kennel I h been so long swattering in!" she said, in t strange way. "Sir Vivian has probably hea nothing about it in India—and I would so fe preserve his esteem! His kind cordiality to m since his return has been a real balm to r poor sore heart. You promise me?"

No! I did not promise her. I merely replied, "You can always convince him—or any one else, with your command of words—that all you do, or have done, must be right! That ought to content you!"

"I must try and justify your eulogiums, should the necessity arise!" she answered, with her calm, inscrutable smile.

CHAPTER VI.

AN ARRAY OF BATTLE.

I HAD not seen Morgana's Haunt since the various alterations and improvements had been completed under my husband's superintendence. What I now beheld was not calculated to restore my good humour. It was evident that no expense had been spared, and Lord Mauleverer made no secret that the restorations were effected entirely at his own, or rather at mine—as the least thing we could do to show our sense of Mrs. Luxmoor's "extremely proper feeling, in resigning that absurd legacy, which, however, showed how justly my father appreciated her merits!" But her taste dictated all that was done; and, as it formerly embel-

lished a churchyard, it had now converted into a perfect little paradise a spot originally planned with a view to ornamental effects. The interior of the house itself had an aspect of light brilliancy and airy elegance that might well have befitted the abode of a fairy princess! I could not refrain from observing, doubtless with some bitterness, after we had dedicated a short interval before dinner to a survey of the improvements, which I thought Sophia pointed out to me with an air of challenge and triumph—"It would really be an advantage in *some* respects, Mrs. Luxmoor, if you could control Lord Mauleverer's taste as effectually at the castle! *These* decorations are at least in harmony with the fantastic building they are intended to adorn!"

"There is a much better taste than mine to regulate matters at the castle," replied Sophia, quietly.

"If you mean the taste of its *supposed* mistress, I am allowed no say whatever on the subject; whereas your opinions are evidently the all in all with Lord Mauleverer at this place!"

Vivian looked round at us both with startled attention. "I thought you told me, Mrs. Luxmoor, that—that this place had been left to you

by the *late* Lord Mauleverer, at his wife's dying request; and that all that has been done in the repairs and beautifying was your own fancy and arrangement," he observed, in a seemingly careless tone.

"Oh, no! assuredly my mother made no such dying request!—it was all my father's kind consideration—who, besides, left Mrs. Luxmoor ten thousand pounds!" I interposed, with doubtless something remarkable in my tone.

"You have not mentioned that, *Sophy*," said Sir Vivian, with singular familiarity of expression, I thought, though it was certainly habitual to him as a boy.

"Because I have refused to receive it. I had no claim to such generosity," she replied, colouring violently; but she added, rallying with an effort, "Moreover, Sir Vivian, I cherish my independence too much to owe so great an obligation even to a family who have already conferred upon me so much kindness!"

"You are an inexplicable creature, Sophia!" Sir Vivian answered, looking at her with surprise, and—as it seemed to me—a kindling admiration in his lustrous eyes, "Here, then, goes another of my delusions respecting you!

Forgive me; but I thought you liked money better than—better far than such an unsubstantial castle of moonshine as *independence!* But still you let people embellish your little palaces of earthly sojourn for you, it appears?"

"I was content with the Haunt exactly as it stood—a complete desolation! But my kind friends at Mauleverer would not allow my residence to remain in the very suitable order in which I found it," she observed, evidently embarrassed.

"Oh!" and again his eye reverted to me, with that puzzled, searching expression which I now repeatedly remarked in it.

It cannot be denied that Sophia made a very brilliant and engaging hostess—and the *recherché* little banquet she set before us combined every requisite of good taste and prandial attraction. She speedily regained the coquettish vivacity and ease that usually marked her manners in society; and it was soon unpleasantly obvious to me that she exercised a very peculiar influence over Sir Vivian in bringing him into her own style of conversation and demeanour. I had never before seen him play the gallant and wit —especially with Sophia. His tone with her

formerly was almost uniformly one of sarcasm and contest—nearly amounting to disdain and aversion. In general he had shown himself frank and plainspoken almost to rudeness. But now I found that he could bandy gay compliments, and the most courtly and honied turns of flattery, even with that mistress of the syren's art.

It needed, in fact, all my dislike and justly excited suspicions, to enable me to resist the charms of Sophia's conversational eloquence. And yet there was something unreal and factitious in all this splendid display. You felt you were not gazing at a natural effulgence, but at the sparkle and glow of the glass diamonds in a play-house chandelier, in the glare of its insalubrious gas. My dislike and reserve were sustained by the certainty to which I speedily arrived, that this insatiable coquette had now dedicated herself to the task of entangling Sir Vivian Ap Howel also in her snares! It even became ominously apparent to me that she was in some fair way of succeeding. It was clear that he was dazzled and attracted into a seductive competition by the brilliant intellectual display she offered to his admiration. And, at the

same time, she managed to unite the most opposite fascinations of a seeming excess of sensibility and tenderness; for when, in his brave, careless way, he chanced to relate some anecdote of the eventful and heroic career he had run, her eyes would fill with tears, and she would follow his words with a breathless eagerness, as if she were stepping after him in very deed over those fields of glory and death. But it was ever one of her spells to mingle that inexplicable and enthralling touch of pathos and passion amid the wildest play of her reckless and revolted wit—as if all that showering spray and fantastic rainbow illusion of colouring sprung from a fountain of living waters, deep and exhaustless as the human heart.

It occurred to me as a subject of the most serious consideration, ought this cruel syren to be permitted to enthral this latest and noblest victim, without an effort being made—if such were possible—at his redemption?

Two things in particular struck me. Vivian was evidently kept in ignorance of Mrs. Luxmoor's peculiar literary successes—and he seemed to be under an impression that she was a widow. He alluded once or twice to the Reverend Caro-

but my duty to enlighten him. It
with the force of conviction, that she v
ing to play upon him the trick she h
nearly succeeded in with Scarlatt!
thought this new victim had a rig
stand, as clearly as possible, what ki
woman courted him so assiduou
intimacy!

I therefore inquired of Sophia, w
appearance of design as I could
"How does your last book go off
moor?—I have inquired of Lord M
but even he seems to know very
it!"

I saw that she looked excessively
and she gave me a look as if to de
versation on the subject. But

"Did you not mention you taught in Paris—and Lady Mauleverer's children here?"

"Well," she said, with affected playfulness, "a writer now-a-days mostly is a teacher—or assumes to be one; and I do teach Lady Mauleverer's children here!"

"By Lord Mauleverer's arrangement—but not, I trust, the doctrines of George Diamond! —*that is* Mrs. Luxmoor's *nom de plume*, Sir Vivian!—George Diamond!—have you ever read any of her works under that designation?"

"One or two—when the weather was not too sultry—to while away the hours in a bungalow or a tent!" replied Sir Vivian, evidently taken very much aback.

"George Diamond approved of *your* works in India!—But I am afraid you did not approve very much of his?" said Sophia, with a glance full of reproach and even indignation at me. I was indifferent to it. But, greatly to my surprise —after a moment's astonished pause, Sir Vivian broke into quite a florid eulogium of the works of George Diamond, and descanted so warmly in their praise, that I looked at him in utter incredulity and astonishment! Sophia laughed

—but there was something hollow and forced in the sound of her mirth.

"I had no notion that I should please such a critic as Sir Vivian Ap Howel—and that is why I have not solicited his judgment in the matter!—!" she said, checking herself suddenly. "In fact, I am told very few of my critics speak so favourably of this last production you so kindly inquire after, Lady Mauleverer, as would give much support to Sir Vivian's partial estimate of my powers! Another reason for reserve!—but you had forgotten, no doubt, that I confided to you my identity with this madcap, George, as a secret which you were not to impart without my permission!"

I perceived my opportunity to dispel the other deception I thought I saw attempted. "Oh, there is not the least fear, Mrs. Luxmoor, that Sir Vivian will carry the tidings of your literary exploits to your husband!" I said.

"I should hope not!" observed Ap Howel, drily; "a descent to Tartarus is not at all to my taste, though acclimatized to Indian summers!"

"Mr. Luxmoor is not *dead*, Sir Vivian!—Whatever put that into your head? He is as

well as his excesses will allow him or any other man to be!" I resumed.

Ap Howel looked indeed amazed, "Why, my dear Mrs. Luxmoor! did you not give me to understand——"

"I gave you to understand that Luxmoor is *dead to me!* And so he is, and shall be to my latest breath!—And besides, from what I hear, it is not at all likely he can live much longer—leading the dreadful life he does!" said Sophia; and she was evidently disconcerted as much as it was possible for one of her ready-witted and audacious *morale* to be.

Suddenly Sir Vivian broke out into one of his old caustic, sad at once and merry, peals of laughter. "Just to think of it!" he exclaimed. "Lady Mauleverer, you have saved me from the most horrible repulse and mortification—only imagine!—if I had *proposed* to Mrs. Luxmoor on the fanciful conclusion, which I know not how I came to, that her lawful proprietor had descended at last to his native realms! Yet how else could I explain to myself the fact of her living here in solitude?—for I have had no time to make inquiries, and what more natural than for me to conclude that the worthy Carolus had

finished his mortal career, and that his widow had retired from Llanhowel to the society and protection of the dear old friends, with whom I left her so tenderly united?"

Sophia bit her lip, and coloured vividly, as she replied, "You know what kind of man my husband was—and is—yes, *is*, no doubt! and therefore, I should say, Sir Vivian, you cannot wonder to find us separated,—not quite by mutual agreement! for he is a real monster of rapacity and revenge!—I need say no more, I know, dear friend, to bind you not to reveal my identity. I did not think it necessary to mention it to you previously, as my solitary and foreign domestic who admitted you, is in my confidence—but *Miss Jones* is my designation in this neighbourhood!"

"Miss Jones!—Good God!" repeated Sir Vivian! "Miss Jones—and George Diamond! Well!" he continued, in a tone of acquiescence, "When a woman is chained for existence to a Carolus Luxmoor, one can't blame her much for being anything else she pleases to be!—If society makes desperadoes," he added, musingly, "she must expect to have her garners broken into!"

If Sophia was displeased with my revelation

her husband's existence, she well knew how avenge herself. She fell, as it were quite naturally, into a philosophic commentary on the delusive power of the passion she admitted, with a jesting kind of remorse, she had once experienced for Luxmoor! She described a woman tricking out her idol from the resources of her own heart and imagination, with a bitter gaiety and a pointedness of allusion that convinced me she was thinking rather of my girlish insanity for Scarlatt, than of her own case. She jeered at me to my face in this way, with perfect ease, and without the least risk of producing an ill effect in a report to him! There was, indeed, something inexpressibly ludicrous, though at the same time desecrating, utterly heartless and disheartening, in this analysis, for even I could not help joining at times in Sir Vivian's constant and really excessive mirth during its progress. She concluded with another of her indirect flings. "However, Sir Vivian! you men have your dolls too, which you dress up in as fine tinsel and rags as we do ours, and fall down and worship as senselessly, for goddesses, while we are busied in the like crea-

tion of demigods!—What makes you laugh so much?"

He made no reply, but his gaiety received a sudden check.

"It is not strange," she continued, after a pause, following up her advantage, "when we consider what men and women really are, after all this deification—that the only lasting passions are the unsuccessful ones!"

"I should say you have taken care never to inspire a passion of that sort, Sophia?" The poignant words came to my lips, and I could not forbear the utterance!"

"Well, I don't know," she replied, shunning my glance; but I could perceive how her own flashed as she did so. "The ancients would not pronounce a man fortunate while his state was still liable to fluctuation—till, in short, the man was dead! The rule will apply, with a little change, to our subject: no passion can be pronounced unsuccessful until it is *finally so!*"

She glanced then at Sir Vivian—and I saw that he coloured slightly.

"So you think there are no happy unions then, Sophia!—But if near acquaintance is such an infallible disillusion, how comes it that

couples are not flying off at tangents in every direction?" said Sir Vivian, with more earnestness in his look than in the tone of his words.

"Oh, the attraction of repulsion is of as binding strength in moral as in physical nature, I suppose! And when there is no longer love, there are vanity, jealousy, egotism,—there is *dog-in-the-mangerishness*, in short!—women especially!—don't you know that even if we no longer valued—or had never valued—the affections of a man, we would rather trample them in the dust, than see them transferred, green and flourishing, on another wall?—And, the nobler the heart we crushed, and the less capable we were of understanding the value of the priceless offering we despised—the more we should enjoy and triumph in the operation!"

She said this quite laughingly, and handing me a plate of melon which she had been all the time artistically carving; but with a look never effaced from my recollection to this hour! It was so full of false but bitter accusation and challenge, that I was struck absolutely dumb!

When I could listen again, I heard Sir Vivian saying in a careless, laughing tone, "Oh, there is no occasion for such a dangerous specific as

matrimony in most cases, Mrs. Luxmoor!—If you could only imagine what a number of fancies and caprices, which we thought lifelong, or still more probably eternal—at the time, we sprightly young fellows survive . . . . no extent of poly—— gamy could suffice to cure us of the thousandth—n part of them!"

"Well, I have no right to blame people for—or not doting always where they have doted once!—!" said Sophia. "One *grows* out of a passion—on often enough, as one does out of one's swaddling—ng clothes!—Do you take sugar to your melon, Sir—ir Vivian! or have you survived the simple taste—tes of your existence in that respect also?"

In that respect also! What did she mean—n? I do not know what strange, unhappy impulse—lse urged me to turn to Sir Vivian, as I heard the—the words, and inquire, with a degree and kind of—of meaning which I own to have been blameable—ole: "Have you indeed survived all your boyish—ish fancies, Sir Vivian? Quite all?—I remember—ber you had a great variety of them at Plas Newydd—d! —I perceive very plainly you have *grown* out—out of some of your aversions: is it the same with—ith your likings?"

I felt myself colouring, bungling and hesitat—t-

ing in my speech as I proceeded, in spite of every effort that I made to control my consciousness of the impropriety and folly of the question I asked. I was the more agitated, observing how deadly pale Sir Vivian turned as I thus addressed him—while Sophia surveyed us both, with a seemingly careless, but in reality absorbed and searching attention. I could see it in her eyes, however busy she appeared chipping off the little nobs on the melon rind in the plate before her with a fruit-knife!

There was a really considerable pause, in the feeling of all present, though it probably only lasted a second.

"No, Lady Mauleverer!" Vivian then replied, in a tremulous voice. "I am not of so capricious a turn as you imagine.—If my colours were shot away to the last shred, that last shred would still be of those with which I sailed out of port to do battle with the world!—See how I cling to every vestige of the past!—Did I not promise *Mrs. Luxmoor* years ago, when she sent me a handkerchief to dry tears, of which I am less ashamed now than I was then—that I would keep it through all that might betide

me, and bring it faithfully back?—and here it is!"

As he spoke he produced from his bosom the identical handkerchief, which I remembered, years gone indeed, he had possessed himself of when we took farewell, on his departure for India —not Mrs. Luxmoor's, but mine!"

"Did *I* give you that?" said Sophia, carelessly laying her hand on it. "My wardrobe was not so very extensive in those days—but I don't remember to have missed this handkerchief, certainly!"

"No, for it was not yours, and never shall be!" I said, pierced to the soul by what I supposed to be this marvellous instance of forgetfulness and indifference—or still more cruel determination to sacrifice me to the novel ascendancy which he seemed anxious to submit himself to—the pride and vanity of a woman who had already so grievously mortified my feelings! I snatched the handkerchief, no doubt a little rudely—and from that instant it became truly "wrought by an Egyptian!"

"I thought so—at least I thought it never had been mine: how came you to make such a mistake, Sir Vivian? My initials were never

surmounted by a coronet . . . and S.L. are not easily mistaken for H.H.P., after one has once thoroughly mastered that A was an archer that shot at a crow, and Z was a zany whatever he might know !—I *have* rhymed, you see !—I am not like Hamlet and the peacock !" said Sophia, coldly. "But really, Lady Mauleverer," she added, with her intricate smile ! "I did not attach so much importance to the trifle, as to wish to deprive its *legitimate* owner of its possession !"

"You are a great admirer of legitimacy, and very studious of the rights of property, in everything, George Diamond !" I remarked—savagely !

"I am very much what I have been made—and perhaps I shall be still more what I am made !" replied Sophia, with oracular obscurity. 'Of my own nature originally I think I had very little of the burglar in me . . . but we must all fulfil our destinies, however little or much inclined to them !—Sir Vivian here, for example," she continued, dexterously changing the conversation, "may survive all this talk to become the great general of the age—Wellington was only a 'Sepoy Captain' when he returned to Europe !—Or he may fill a nameless mound

in the Balkan, in the service of his polygamous friends, the Turks, since the allies seem only to intend prating on their behalf!"

Who knows indeed what he might have become, this youth already recognized as a hero by his country and the world? Perchance the very man and general England most needed during her direful struggle under the thunder-guarded walls of Sebastopol! Young, valiant, famous—of a matchless military instinct and genius already so marvellously displayed: what might Vivian Ap Howel not have proved himself amid those terrific crises of history, when England, for the first time showed herself to be still so affluent in men, but in such lamentable lack of A MAN?

Subtlest of flatterers! I saw Vivian's whole visage illumine with the effulgence of a conqueror stepping into the car of triumph! I heard with what tenderness and sweetness he answered, "And you, my kind Sibyl, what destiny do you assign to yourself?"

"Oh, for me! my destiny is accomplished!" she replied, with singular vivacity. "I have returned to these solitudes but to die in peace! I consider myself the hull only of a once gallant

and trimset bark, cast by the tempest among hospitable-*rocks!* where I may get sandchoked and go to pieces at my good leisure, with only choughs and seagulls for mourners and spectators! Why, what on earth could I wish for more? —surrounded, as I am, by the dearest friends of my youth—so weary and exhausted at the core as I feel—than leave to perish tranquilly? But what a strange fit of the dismals has come over us all! Brighten us up, Sir Vivian! You have not yet told us the story of your Indian campaigns; let us be your Desdemonas over the dessert, while you tell us the marvellous tale!"

Sir Vivian laughed, but he, too, seemed to feel the necessity of effecting a change in the conversation, and he began to relate to us some anecdote of his first arrival in India, which, gradually, under Sophia's skilful promptings, expanded into an animated relation of his most remarkable military experiences. Vivian had a simple but vividly picturesque style of narrative, which enchained the interest almost as much as his subject—rich in deeds of high heroism and achievement as it was! He scarcely ever spoke

of himself personally in these details; but it was not possible to perform the play of Hamlet with an entire omission of the part; and, moreover, Sophia took care to supply the lacunes his modesty left; for she was wonderfully and minutely familiar with the events of his career; and seemed to have made it a subject of her special observation and record! Surely she could not have *studied up* those scattered historical memoranda of years for the occasion? Yet I own some such suspicion entered my mind; and, with other circumstances, confirmed in me the notion that she had formed the most insidious and baneful designs upon the young, heroic narrator, which required only time and opportunity to develop. Had he not himself formerly told me how he dreaded her powers of fascination, should he ever be possessed of such advantages as might tempt her to exercise them on him? To feel the danger was a sufficient attestation of its power! I determined to observe!—and, if need were, to do whatever lay in my scope, to thwart the designs of this malignant sorceress. Not withheld but rather stimulated by another and almost contrary con-

ion in my heart, that her real aim in the se she adopted towards Sir Vivian might be ely to blind me the more effectually to her gns on my husband.

CHAPTER VII.

QUID PRO QUO.

It needed only as many months to pr catastrophe of four existences.

Let me avow it! I had a share in destruction! Of a verity, perchan have avoided it could I have been allow the success of those entangling in which I speedily became convince was labouring to involve the fiery petuous nature she had allured so

tioned, Sir Vivian became an almost constant visitor at Morgana's Haunt. The arrogant condescension with which Lord Mauleverer received him at the castle was so little to his taste that he only visited us once, until, at my husband's desire, I requested his presence on matters of business connected with his trust in my affairs. But the progress of Sophia's artifices could not well escape my observation, as, in pursuance of my own plan, I found it necessary to acquiesce in a renewal of some considerable degree of visiting intercourse between her and myself. Moreover, the complaints and annoyance of my husband in the fact of Sir Vivian's frequent visitation at the Haunt, would have sufficed alone to establish it.

All that I thus saw and heard, confirmed me in my notions of Mrs. Luxmoor's detestable plans! What else could they be considered—those persevering efforts to lure a young man, of passions so ardent and inconsiderate, into such a terrible gulf of ruin and disgrace as an intrigue with a married woman whom such a man as Carolus Luxmoor held as a property to be marketed, in any way most suitable to his own interests and exigencies? Such I could

not and did not doubt, very soon, was Sophia's object—unless I was to consider her actuated by a motive still more poignantly offensive to me personally—as using this rivalry to urge on Lord Mauleverer's passion for herself into the mad excesses it finally betrayed him.

She certainly took no pains to disguise her levity and coquetry with Ap Howel from my observation—rather, she seemed to take pleasure in exhibiting to me the progress of her triumph —all the play of the bewildering fascinations she set in motion, casting their flowery but inextricable wreaths around him at every step. I took pains—as I feared, with little success—to counteract these ensnaring manœuvres. I opposed a reserve and silence in my own manner which was a direct condemnation of the reckless licence Sophia assumed in hers. But in vain. Even the open reproofs at times extorted from me produced little other effect, I found, saving to irritate her into the use of weapons of sarcasm and defying ridicule, in which I was no match for her, or disdained to show myself one.

The more I observed, the stronger became my conviction that Vivian was being fast drawn

it magic circle whence only shocks so struck men lifelong to the earth, seemed of rescuing Sophia's victims. They ne another strangely now! The sin- and hardiness of Mrs. Luxmoor's ideas ressions no longer appeared to repel Experience of the world had given parently a relish for wit of the mocking dant order in which, most frequently, of mes, she indulged. But how was he into the sympathy he manifested in versive notions in morality—in the lations of the sexes—in the regulations propriety have established in their in- e? On one occasion, I remember to ard her maintain, that a woman has as right to fall in love with a man, and her passion, as a man could possibly have voman! and she endeavoured to prove meful, or rather shameless thesis, by a d whimsical arguments. And Ap Howel ed by constant laughter, until I cut her short by inquiring whether she *ever* could have, the face to put her theory ctice? She knew to what circumstance career I alluded! and this was one of

the many cases in which my knowledge of Sophia's bygones enabled me to silence, if not to confute, those vicious paradoxes! But it was evident the habitual gaiety and brilliancy of her conversation possessed great charms for Sir Vivian, whose constitutionally deep though easily ignitable melancholy was a well-prepared fuel for those dangerous sparks. He hated nothing so much as to be abandoned to his demon—and Sophia's was its laughing opposite, from whose presence it fled as darkness flies the light.

Her own unhappiness she never suffered to appear on the surface. She had the Spartan's endurance, with his fox gnawing at his heart under his cloak, in this respect. She diffused a counterfeit happiness ever around her in society. Men felt it to be unreal—that all those splendid flashes gave out no true light; but they felt themselves amused for the hour; and so dark are the abysses surrounding existence, that every flutter of brightness seems to the aching sense like a glimpse of its lost eternal day.

It was by laughter that Sophia sapped morality. She set up the most cynical and destructive theories in the form of light, playful paradoxes and vagaries of wit, which it seemed

superfluous a waste of reason to refute by gument, as to bring a fire-engine to extinguish e evanescent flicker of a jack-o'-lantern. Even r own misfortunes often only furnished her th the materials of a bitter pleasantry; and nsidering all she had suffered in her matri-ny, her constant inveighing against the re-aints and shackles of the married state—her dlessly diversified sarcasms on its sameness d dulness, even under the most favourable in-ences—her reckless theories of change in all e customs and laws regulating the relations of e sexes—might have had some claim to in-lgence, if she had not put her fancies into practi-l forms so detestable! It really seemed to me last, that under cover of a pretendedly ironical d sportive antagonism to the pedantic and surd usages of what she characterized as an ete, Chinese system of civilization, which prives the soul of all natural impulses and rkings—she was exaggerating the general ne of allurement and cajolery in her manners, wards persons of the opposite sex, into almost en love-making and temptation to Sir vian!

It was not possible for me to know, or even

to imagine, that under cover of responding to this dangerous flirtation, the unfortunate young man concealed the reviving intensity of his misplaced passion for myself! Perhaps, in the fascinations of a sensual allurement, endeavoured to divert its frenzied ardour from the forbidden, but too real object! It is also certain now, that, with the wild and subtle revengefulness of his blood and character, Vivian endeavoured thus to retaliate upon my husband—upon Sophia herself—the wrong he imagined they had united in inflicting upon him, in the eternal loss of the woman upon whom his strong affections had fixed themselves, in their first luxuriant spring and growth.

And this passion had now lost the sublim purity and integrity of youth: was mixed wit a dark, choking underwood of briars and jungl in which the serpent and the tiger might gli and crouch for prey!

My husband on his part did little or noth to diminish the fervour of the dislike he ot to have known he had formerly done all ir power to kindle in young Ap Howel. ' rarely met but at Morgana's Haunt—and on terms of a mutual reserve and coldness,

an excess of politeness, as far removed as possible from real respect and deference. Lord Mauleverer availed himself of the pretext of his dislike for Sir Vivian's authorized interference in our affairs, to abandon to me all personal part in the negotiations pending with him, as chief trustee of my property under my father's will. But even Mrs. Luxmoor's skill in management, finally, hardly sufficed to prevent some open display of the sentiments lurking in the hearts of the two men. Lord Mauleverer shunned the approximation as much as possible: and Sir Vivian's arrival anywhere, became at last almost the signal for his departure. But it resulted eventually, from Sir Vivian's system of retaliation, that the former found himself almost compelled to relinquish the society of the mistress of Morgana's Haunt, unless on condition of sharing it with that he most detested!

There was no ill-feeling of any kind lost between them, certainly; but in my husband, disdain and hatred probably struggled for the ascendancy, for he still affected to look down on Sir Vivian as an upstart, audacious boy, who had no right to pretend to an equality with men of mature age! One would have thought he

entirely ignored the facts that this boy had been the absolute governor of a province as large as an European Kingdom; had raised, disciplined, fed armies; and had commanded in numerous actions, entitled to the glory and distinction of battles deciding the destiny of whole races of men. Yet Lord Mauleverer could not have found it easy to forget these circumstances. No sooner was Sir Vivian's return to his native county known—that county in which my husband had made himself so disliked a resident—than every species of popular ovation flowed in upon the youthful hero. Deputations, with fine speeches in their mouths, thronged his ruined halls; freedoms of cities were presented to him: and a splendid sword, for which the whole county, rich and poor alike, eagerly subscribed, was bestowed upon him.

Nevertheless, as long as Lord Mauleverer cherished any hope of making Sir Vivian an agent in his plans to obtain the entire possession of my inheritance, he concealed his rancorous sentiments towards him under a decent veil.

But this lasted only for a time. Sir Vivian insisted on a thorough inspection of all the documents on which my husband based his plea for

the immediate redemption of the heavy mortgage on our landed property, before he would give consent to the necessary means. This had become a paramount object with Lord Mauleverer —and indeed it was not difficult for him to show that we stood at a tremendous disadvantage with our borrowed money, from the intricate and doubtful nature of the security we had been enabled to offer. Mere insurances of our lives swallowed up the interest of a very large sum of money. And besides, Scarlatt often protested that he could not bear the idea of any "hook-nosed, sharky usurer," holding a species of ownership and control over our possession of "the only property *worth calling property!*" But Sir Vivian and his lawyers were dissatisfied with their examination of the documents reluctantly submitted to them. It was not merely the prodigious extravagance and want of judgment, but too observable in all our pecuniary transactions so far, that set Sir Vivian against the scheme. It was found that Lord Mauleverer had become virtually, for life, the owner of my landed property; and to redeem the mortgage with the moneys of the trust fund, would be to place me and my children in an

entire state of dependence upon him. Owing to the circumstances under which my marriage was contracted, there were, of course, no settlements between us—and Sir Vivian insisted that this defect should be remedied before he would consent to the transfer. On the other hand, Scarlatt would not hear of "this unnecessary complication" being effected; and thus no decision was arrived at for a considerable period.

Meanwhile, the discussion of these affairs necessarily threw Sir Vivian and myself a good deal together in private. I am far from imputing to my husband, or even to the still viler serpent-craft of Sophia, any purposed encouragement and multiplying of these occasions, with a view to furnish some foundation for the future infamies of their device. I cannot think that Scarlatt could have matured the plan of ridding himself of a wife to whom he preferred another, by one of the most detestable plots ever formed against a woman, and which included the sacrifice of his own honor! I believe his criminality as yet extended only to having conceived, or suffered to revive in his breast, a passion for another woman, the gratification of which he hoped to secure in a stealthy and undetected manner. As for

Sophia, it is still my belief, that if she could have succeeded in substituting young Ap Howel as the victim of her own vile needs, and resolution to free herself, by any means, from the thraldom of her detested husband—she would have deigned to leave me mine! But not until she had thoroughly humbled me by establishing her power over him, and taken vengeance on himself for ancient grudges, by the defeat of his now favourite hopes!

It is true also that lawyers, stewards, and other persons connected with the investigation entered into, were frequently present at our interviews: but matters of a secret, family nature were sometimes to be discussed, relative to our debts and obligations. And surely Lord Mauleverer ought not to have lent so many facilities—even under the peculiar circumstances of the case—to an intimacy between a young woman, whom the world in general did not set down as entirely destitute of personal attraction, and a young man who united so many qualities likely to win the enthusiastic admiration of the sex—glittering in the species of renown that most commands its notice! But Scarlatt was too much absorbed in his own views and objects to

trouble himself about any other consideration. He generally took advantage of Sir Vivian's visits to the castle, to hasten to Morgana's Haunt, where he was for awhile assured the detested shadow of his supposed rival would not intrude. For me, I can solemnly declare that so far from suspecting the real state of Vivian's feelings, I was harassed daily more and more, by the conviction that he too was entangled in the magic circle of Sophia's fascinations, and that the difficulty of extricating him from them rendered the duty of attempting it, by any means in my power, hourly more and more imperative! But I knew not how to begin upon such a subject—what excuse to allege for my interference! For above all I dreaded Vivian should suspect me of a jealous feeling with regard to my husband—or should imagine I had reason to fear the ascendancy of a woman so little worthy—as I dreamed in my pride—of exercising any over me!

At last, however, not only my own observations, but the still more exasperating complaints of my husband, satisfied me that I ought at least to put Sir Vivian on his guard, as far as lay in my power, to the true character and motives actuating Sophia. Lord Mauleverer was always

teasing me to know whether Mrs. Luxmoor and Vivian had been on such friendly terms at Llanhowel, as to account for the cordiality and seeming suddenness of their intimacy now! He thought they had even disliked one another at Plas Newydd! He was constantly bringing me in accounts of what he began to characterize as the extraordinary and suspicious excess of friendliness, existing between them; and expressing his dissatisfaction at Mrs. Luxmoor's disregard for her own position, and the caution it demanded of her! I was driven, as it were, into what I did, by my anguished conviction that her success in the task of luring my only true and sincere friend into a gulf of ruin and disgrace, in which all his bright qualities—all the high hopes formed of him—would be irretrievably lost—was looming into a distinct and inevitable form of destruction!

I was at last myself the witness of a scene of such lively flirtation between Mrs. Luxmoor and Vivian, that it gave me an opportunity I had for some time desired of decisively expressing my disapprobation of her Parisian freedom of manners—an introduction of which, I told her plainly, I thought, was not a desirable improvement

in the simplicity of our Welsh provincial notions of female decorum, She endeavoured to laugh it off; but I left the Haunt abruptly, taking no pains to conceal my disgust. And when I next saw Sir Vivian I entered into an explanation of the reasons of my conduct, which I imagined ought effectually to satisfy him of its propriety.

I told him explicitly that I desired to put him on his guard against the artifices of a woman whom I knew by bitter experience to be of the most treacherous and dangerous character! I supported this statement, which evidently startled Vivian, by a relation of the extraordinary manner in which Mrs. Luxmoor had infatuated my proud and cold father into a course of conduct so unbecoming—at variance with his whole previous career. Tears rushed to my eyes—and I could see almost extorted Vivian's—when I told him how the knowledge of my father's profound moral—if not actual infidelity, had embittered the last moments of my poor mother, whom he himself had loved and honoured once almost as a son! I related to him the full story of the trial in the Arches Court, and of the damning revelations that accompanied it. Above all, the unwomanly,

he infamous part Sophia was clearly shown to ıave played in the attempt to inveigle Scarlatt nto an intrigue, knowing herself to be the wife f another; and that she was cajoling him into nextricable ruin and disgrace as a consequence! ۱ detestable plot, in which it appeared to me— declared to Sir Vivian, in the most earnest ones of warning—she was now attempting, ılder, and withered, and disgraced by years of ı wandering, reckless, unprotected career—to nvolve him in, to the certain destruction of his haracter and brilliant prospects in the world.

I own I did not sufficiently discriminate mere suspicions, the accusations of enemies, from certainties, when I delineated Sophia's residence abroad as the career of one of those most dangerous of courtesans who unite the externals of decency—of every splendid attraction of mind as well as of person—with the worst corruption of their class!

Finally—overmastered as I proceeded by passion and indignation—I denounced to Ap Howel all I knew or suspected of Sophia's designs and progress in seducing from me the affections of my husband. I endeavoured to make him share my conviction that the terrible preference

she now seemed to bestow upon him was rather an artifice to excite Lord Mauleverer into some open violation of his duties, than a real one. I do not deny, in short, that I painted Sophia, to her intended victim, in all the darkest colours in which she appeared to me at that time arrayed! Corrupt, heartless, destitute of all real affection or tenderness; covering the vilest designs under the fairest seemings; coquettish almost beyond the utmost verge of decency: in brief, wholly unworthy of the love of any man of feeling or honor—independently of the fact that she still remained indissolubly the wife of another! Of a detestable villain, certainly —but not for that reason debarred from the absolute property the laws of England gave a husband in his wife. Such, I say, she appeared to me: and such I strove, with every energy of language the most vehement indignation could supply, to make her appear!

Say what I might, however, I could not bring Sir Vivian to take a serious view of the circumstances I placed before him. He continued to laugh nearly the whole time with his singular double-toned gaiety. He seemed only once struck and annoyed when I alluded to the

most certainty of his being used by that in-
iguing woman as a spur to the progress of her
esigns upon my husband.

"You still think Scarlatt Suett, then, the
ghth wonder of the world, before whose star
l other men's must grow pale?" he said, with
sudden quiver, as of violet-hued lightning, over
is visage. "Well, no matter, we shall see!
leanwhile, I cannot but think that you ex-
ggerate poor Sophy's delinquencies, Lady
lauleverer, under the influence of *jealousy*!
uite causelessly, too, I am well assured; and
ope to convince yourself erelong. But I
ertainly never did hear of this trial before.
nd did Scarlatt Suett really confess—declare
efore a public auditory—I beg pardon, did my
ord Mauleverer—absolutely state that the poor
oman made love to him?"

I replied by producing a newspaper containing
record of the trial. It was the one Scarlatt had
ent to my mother, which I had found among
y father's papers. Vivian took it away with
im, with scarcely another observation, desiring,
s he said, to peruse and judge at leisure. So-
hia had calculated well. In the tumultuous
vents of his first arrival in India, he had missed

all but the public events of English history; and this revelation, which I made to him, was one indeed!

Vivian returned me the newspaper in a few days—but only with this comment—that he thought Mrs. Luxmoor had very much wasted her kindness; but that he could not think it would be always the case with so charming a woman!

Nay, far from producing the effect I had intended, I soon ascertained he had become a still more assiduous visitor at Morgana's Haunt. And this I learned chiefly from my husband's exasperated report. I was offended—and even more than offended—at this slighting of my warning. I could not bring Lord Mauleverer or Sir Vivian into any yielding of their points in the affair of the trusteeship. I began to feel that there was something systematic and strange in the manner the former declined taking any personal part in the discussion. Altogether, I grew at last, as I considered, and still consider, justly irritated with Ap Howel himself, and ordered myself to be denied to him on several subsequent occasions when he presented himself at the castle.

These circumstances led to a result which was a great step in our advancing catastrophe!

I had noticed something very strange in Lord Mauleverer's demeanour for several days. He had scarcely stirred out of the house, but seemed in constant expectation of some very important intelligence reaching him in it. I could observe him whenever a messenger approached the castle, start up, and hurry downstairs to meet the tidings on their way. He complained of no indisposition—he harshly repelled the suggestion that he might be in need of some special attention to his health. His whole demeanour was even unusually abrupt, stern, and peremptory. I was, nevertheless, gratified to make certain that his habitual visits to Morgana's Haunt had ceased. I began to hope that politics had resumed their old interest for him, and that he expected news from town which might entirely divert his thoughts from the unlawful pursuit to which I imagined he had dedicated them.

In the midst of this false beaming of hope, Sir Vivian arrived one morning at Mauleverer, and sent up his card, with so earnest a message, requesting to see me on particular business, that

I thought it would look strange to the servant himself to refuse.

Sir Vivian was admitted. To this moment I do not forget his vivid expression of triumph, mingled with an agitation he could not wholly conceal from my notice.

He came—he speedily explained, in his ironical, laughing way—to set my mind quite at rest on the notion I seemed to entertain, that Mrs. Luxmoor had any improper designs on Lord Mauleverer—or that she was using himself as a foil and incentive to any wrong inclination I might be so unhappy as to imagine his lordship could possibly entertain for her!

I had scarcely power to falter forth a demand to know his meaning. He communicated it very briefly, but with an almost boyish delight and glee of triumph that showed how young he still was in the most youthful of passions—personal vanity—or with what skill he gave to the fiercest and strongest of mature manhood the airy giddiness and inconsequence of its manifestations. "I know now what a fine thing military reputation is! I thought, in my first fight, glory meant dead bodies, and a most insufferable scent of brimstone! But it means

the favour—the preference of the fair!—and in the most wonderful degree! The thing I always most aspired to, Lady Mauleverer! Do but imagine—form a notion of an impossibility—that is ten thousand times more than impossible—and you will realize that my company may be preferred to the favour and protection of the noble earl, your husband!—essential as they have always hitherto seemed to the wellbeing of the enchantress of Morgana's Haunt! Summon all your powers of belief, Lady Mauleverer!"—and he laughed still more energetically—"and learn that the earl is so disgusted with my refusal to see my duties, as trustee of your father's will, with his eyes—*or for some other reason!*—that he has informed Mrs. Luxmoor she must take the alternative either of declining my friendship and visits, or his own! And, by the tomb of Hyder! she is so oblivious of the priority and delights of the literary and platonic association they have so long enjoyed, as to tell him plainly that in these matters she will not be dictated to—will receive whom she pleases in her own house—and, above all, a gentleman whom she honors with so high and particular an esteem as my illustrious self!—Illustrious

that is to be, you understand! And so they had quite an affair of leopardess and jaguar over it; and the jaguar left the Haunt in high dudgeon, with an intimation that until the little concession is made to him, he shall not again grace it with his presence!"

My husband's anxiety of expectation—impatience — tempestuous humor — were thus disastrously explained! But I was struck by a still more pressing sense of danger on the score of my informant.

"Good Heavens! how do you know this?" I exclaimed, breathlessly.

"She has sent me a full, true, and particular account; declares that she has not hesitated for a moment to resist compulsion so unauthorized; that she has not seen Lord Mauleverer for several days, and never intends again to see him on such terms!—concluding by requesting me to favour her with a visit at my very earliest convenience, as a complete demonstration of the way she has decided!"

"Have you the letter? Will you allow me to see it?" I said, quite unable to give credit to what I heard.

"No," he replied, colouring ingenuously,

"that would not be fair!—I shall not take Lord Mauleverer as my model in anything! I mean," he added, retractingly, "I have no right, unless I receive it from herself, to exhibit information intended only for my private appreciation—and couched in George Diamond's most lively and indiscreet style! For you know poor Sophy is always forgetting herself that she is a woman—from the habit she has got into of writing as a man!"

"I understand!" I replied, with an inexpressible pang of almost every feeling in my heart wounded to its most sensitive quick. "And you are going hence to Morgana's Haunt—to the presence of this detestable syren!—to hear from her own insidious lips the declaration of the preference that dishonors you, and is intended to secure you in its treacherous embrace to a fathomless destruction!"

I spoke with sadness, mingled with a bitterness mounting from the deepest founts of my heart.

"Why, what makes you so angry, dear Lady Mauleverer? I think you ought rather to rejoice in the result—if you were sincere, which I can hardly think, in imagining Lord Maul-

everer was listening a little too attentively to the strains of this same syren—who, it seems, never sings in vain!" Vivian replied, in tones that startled me. I looked up—and quailed beneath the lurid, searching inquiry in his gaze.

"Of a syren indeed!" I replied, hardly knowing what I said. "Gracious Heaven! what are the spells with which this woman lures men to forget every duty to God, to society, to themselves?"

"She *has* spells, whether of the white magic sort or not!" said Vivian. "Upon my honor, Lady Mauleverer, I must admit that I incur no light danger—and partly for your sake—in consenting to accept the flattering preference Mrs. Luxmoor evinces for my society! She is the most seductive and brilliant creature in the world—of the sort!"

This last expression gave me a degree of hope—it was pronounced in so peculiar a tone: one full of a strange contempt and shrinking away as from some inner contemplation. I remembered that I had drawn a dreadful portrait of Sophia, which could not have failed to haunt the memory of Sir Vivian. All that I could recall of the likings and antagonisms of his

youth were opposed to her influence! Was it impossible still to save him from the deadly folds enveloping him?

"Why then do you venture into her society? —O Vivian! remember all that I have told you of her!—think of all that she is capable! You know that I love you as a brother—and that your disgrace and ruin by her perfidy will break my heart!"

I reminded him then of all the degrading, wicked intrigues in which Sophia had been clearly proved so guilty an agent! I confess, I exaggerated on all my previous exaggerations! My whole soul glowed with indignation—at the fate menacing one whom I held so dear, and had so much cause, as him to whom I denounced this fatal woman! I even added to the passionate diatribe, what I knew would move Sir Vivian most of all—the expression of my own conviction at last, that she had been concerned in the conspiracy which inveigled me, in my girlhood, into the imprudent marriage I had now—I tacitly admitted—lived to see cause to regret!

This fired him evidently. "Poor child! and do you know your own misery then so well?—

It wanted but this!" I heard him mutter, incoherently. "But what would you have me do? —I will do anything—I think—that you can bid me do!"

"Promise me then, upon your faith and honor as a gentleman, that you will never accept this infamous invitation—for infamous it must be!—That you will never go again to Morgana's Haunt!—Never wilfully place yourself again in the society of this depraved woman!" I said with energy.

He turned round upon me, his blue eyes filling with a strange light of mirth, and some thought I could not analyse, gliding with a yet more meteor fire in their depths.

"But don't you think . . . after all . . not exactly as a woman . . . but as a fellow— Christian," he said, quaintly, "that this will be to inflict too severe a mortification upon poor George?—For after all, she is a woman to the very core of her—by heavens! large and generous, and unselfish heart, say what we will of her!"

This sally completed my anger and indignation, with my apprehension for the peril in which the enthusiastic utterer too clearly stood—

I deny not that I was well aware of the intense, the bitter, the unpardonable mortification I was bent on securing for Sophia! From all Ap Howel admitted, I could not but perceive that he himself took her invitations as advances, which it was infamy in a person of her sex, and in her position, to have offered; but a rejection of which, was the greatest of possible slights in a person of his! But I was too much exasperated against Sophia, by my own sufferings and apprehensions, to put what regarded her in any balance against the motives that weighed so heavily with myself at the moment.

"Very well, Sir Vivian," I said; "Mrs. Luxmoor's heart may be all you have described it; it's very large certainly—it could contain, I verily believe, all mankind—so infinitely philanthropic is it! But as yet I only know two of the forms I discern in it—my father and my husband! If you are inclined to make the third, so be it; I cannot prevent it! But I have suffered this woman's approach, since I knew of these facts, only by compulsion.—I am now utterly wearied and disgusted with her; and I intend never again to see or hold any friendship or association with her. And, moreover, with regard to my

friends, I take a leaf out of my husband's book, and I tell you, and all whom it may concern, Sir Vivian, that it is necessary you should choose between my society and hers! Visit at Mrs. Luxmoor's still, and I will never see or speak to you again, if I can prevent it, on this side eternity!"

"That is a long time!" said Vivian, after a profound pause of several minutes' duration. "But—after all—fascinating as she is—I would rather, I think, Lady Mauleverer!" (his voice grew thick and troubled), "SPEND ETERNITY with you than with Sophia Luxmoor! Say only the word, and—without your permission—I will never see Sophia again—never speak to her more! But you know the penalty!—I am sure she will have one victim or other; and if not me—her old Plas Newydd conquest!"

"She has already destroyed her influence with my husband surely by her preference of yourself! He cannot be so infatuated—so base—as to persevere in such a case!"

"But you will run the risk!—Say only that!" returned Vivian, in tones which, whatever light they shed into my mind, I was too much ab-

sorbed in my own ideas at the moment, to investigate.

"Yes, yes!" I replied, with vehemence—and the compact was made. Vivian pledged me his word of honor; and perhaps he was glad to raise such a barrier to the infirmity of his own resolution—that he would not again visit Morgana's Haunt, without my permission.

We shook hands, both of us perhaps with lightened hearts—on this agreement; and it so happened, unluckily enough, that at the precise moment Lord Mauleverer entered the apartment.

He started and looked at us for a moment with an expression of the greatest surprise. "Have you *then* concluded on some arrangement respecting that unhappy trust-fund, at last?" he inquired, in a strangely haughty and peremptory tone, almost certain to provoke instant ire and retort, on the part of Ap Howel. But I gave him no opportunity to act on his probable impulse.

"No—Sir Vivian was just going," I said, "and I am not aware that we are any nearer an arrangement respecting the money; only I was endeavouring to express to him my sense of

gratitude and confidence in the friendship which induces him to take my part in what I am determined shall prove a final discussion between myself and Mrs. Luxmoor! To such an extent indeed, as to induce him to promise me to refuse a very urgent invitation she has sent him to Morgana's Haunt; and, in fact, to decline her society in future altogether!"

I saw, with satisfaction I own, what a dark cloud came over my husband's countenance.

"Have you received an invitation from Mrs. Luxmoor!—which you have declined, Sir Vivian—for this strange reason?" he observed, in tones of moody pique. "And pray, madam," turning in sudden irritation to me, from Ap Howel's half ironical gesture of assent; "what may be your pretext for this extraordinary freak of your very extraordinary temper?"

"I am disgusted—completely disgusted—with Mrs. Luxmoor's language, conduct, and ideas!" I replied, with angry vehemence.

"Say the truth!—say that you are humiliated and exasperated by her superiority in all those respects to yourself!" returned Lord Mauleverer, in a similar tone. "However," he continued, looking, with scarcely disguised vindictiveness, at Sir Vivian, "I should be glad to under-

stand whether this long negotiation is ever to come to any conclusion; as, if not, we have no right to absorb so much of Sir Vivian's valuable time!"

"I don't think of that, Lord Mauleverer. I shall have more than ever at my disposal, unless I should resume my pleasant lounges at Morgana's Haunt! For, though I comply with the request of a friend whom I value above all others, men think very differently from women, of course, on certain subjects!" replied Ap Howel, with laughing defiance in his looks. "But with regard to these funds," he continued, "on which there has been so much more said than done, I must repeat, as I have declared all along, as soon as your lordship is prepared to make settlements to the full amount of the transfer, I am prepared to permit the discharge of your encumbrances, with a sufficient portion of the money placed at my discretion."

"We must try, then, some other way!—such as an act of Parliament disentailing the property! It is impossible to submit to the insolence of such dictation!" returned Lord Mauleverer, swelling and flaming in the countenance with rage.

"But if Lady Mauleverer listens to my advice, she will not entertain the idea for a moment of becoming a party to *disinherit her children!*" Vivian retorted.

My husband was silent for a moment—struggling possibly with feelings to which he did not think it advisable or prudent to give vent. Passion, however, won the throw.

"You must then permit me to say, Sir Vivian!" he resumed, in a voice tremulous with anger, "that henceforth I shall thank you to abstain from bestowing any of your advice at all upon my wife; and I shall look upon your presence in this house as an unauthorised intrusion!"

"If this house—if this castle—belonged to you, Lord Mauleverer, I should have been the last person in the world ever to have intruded in it! But as it does not, I will only take my dismissal from the owner!" And he turned to me.

"Then you are always welcome to it! I shall not be so suicidal as to deprive myself of my only sincere friend and adviser!" I said these words, exasperated beyond the limits of a patience which had been so long on the utmost strain.

"Make your choice, then, Lady Mauleverer —between your *friend* and your *husband!*" was the abrupt rejoinder, and Lord Mauleverer left the apartment.

The expression—the look that accompanied it—recalled me to a sense of the danger and incongruity of the position in which I had placed myself. "You hear him, Sir Vivian!" I exclaimed, clasping my hands in despair. "Yes, I must part with my only friend! You have placed me in safety from the treachery of my only enemy! Be content for awhile with your good work, and do not visit me again until—until"—

"My Lord Mauleverer sends for me?" Vivian interrupted me with a scornful, bitter laugh. "I shall expect a summons from him as soon to the *Kerig y Drudion!* But, however, it is plain how you love this man—who cares so little for you—and it is enough! It is to be hoped you will succeed in retaining your invaluable prize! I doubt it! Meanwhile you have pronounced upon me a final and irrevocable sentence of banishment—and, under those circumstances, I certainly shall resign the trust your father's will conferred on me—agreeably

to the option he assigned me—into your own hands! I shall stay at my ruin only long enough to make certain that neither friends nor foes desire my longer presence in England—and then for the Danube!"

"But—but—you will not go to Morgana's Haunt again!"

"You have beguiled me of the promise, Lady Mauleverer—and I have already lived to regret it!—Good God!—as poor Sophia herself has often said—we cannot do without some species of happiness on the earth!—If not of the heart, at least of the senses!"

Poor Sophia indeed! But he gave me no time to comment on his words. He flung out of the apartment with as little ceremony of leavetaking as my husband had previously exhibited.

CHAPTER VIII.

LOVE AND JEALOUSY.

WHAT a period of ravening anxiety for me followed this interview with Sir Vivian. There were no visible signs—no flash, no hoarse mutter—and yet I felt that a thundercloud, fraught with devastation and ruin, was blackening over me!

It must have been fully three weeks since I had seen or heard anything of Mrs. Luxmoor, but what I myself talked. I made no secret of my thorough alienation: and I found that people in general—women, at all events—perfectly shared my opinion of her manners and conversation, and wondered how I had countenanced such a woman so long! Mrs. Suett, in particu-

lar—to whom I thought it best rather to hint suspicions of her new designs on Sir Vivian, than of the progress she had made in the resumption of those she formerly entertained on her son—Mrs. Suett, I knew, would be the more irritated against her on this account, from the sanguine hopes she cherished that Sir Vivian's generosity and kindness were so conspicuously displayed towards herself and daughter, from a feeling of admiration, ripening into attachment, towards the latter. I take indeed no shame to myself to acknowledge that I desired to make my neighbourhood—the whole county, in fact—an uncomfortable residence for this many-aliased *Miss Jones!* It seemed I had no other resource. Her husband himself appeared to take no further malevolent interest in her. Mrs. Suett let me understand pretty plainly that he was aware of her residence in Glamorgan, but he had not stirred in the matter, so far as she could any way ascertain.

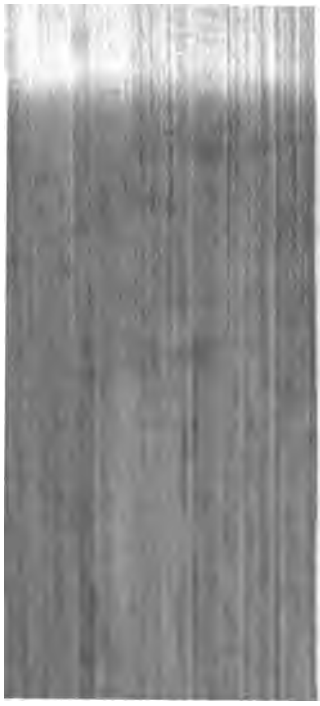
Concerning Sir Vivian, I was left in a much more tormenting state of doubt. He was become—according to report—a perfect recluse at Castell Ap Howel. But his estrangement and resentment against me were established by the

facts of his continued absence; and of his having sent me a formal resignation of his office of trustee. By the arrangements in my father's will, I was now at liberty to name another in his place—and it could not be difficult to find one of a more complying mood. Meanwhile I did not feel assured that my unkind treatment would not throw him back for consolation into the labyrinth of seduction from which I had sought to withdraw him! What, after all, was the pledge he had given me, against the enthralment of the senses in a young man? I knew Vivian honourable indeed to a point of romantic chivalry! But might he not consider himself absolved, by the sudden change in our amicable relations, from what might be made to seem merely a prosecution of a spiteful and causeless vindictiveness on my part?

So I thought it possible to be—and would have given much to be enabled to satisfy myself of the groundlessness of my apprehensions.

I had nearer reasons of uneasiness also, that might have sufficed alone to make me miserable.

I earnestly desired a reconciliation with my husband. I could not look at my sweet children, of whom he now took scarcely any



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more difficult to sustain it against the man whom I had once so passionately loved. Both the perturbers of our peace had vanished—for I was well informed that Scarlatt, for all this considerable interval, had not once directed his steps towards Morgana's Haunt. He remained almost altogether in his private apartments—engaged, the people about him concluded, in his usual political studies and calculations. He wrote a great deal, I was told, and what other subjects could he have had?

At last that strange weakness which besets the heart of woman, and renders us such very fools of time and mutability, came whelming over mine! I was stirred with a deep, passionate yearning to win back that love, which had once been the whole aim and happiness of my existence. A lawful—a hallowed emulation awoke in my soul, and a vain hope whispered it, that it could not be in the nature of a man not absolutely and irredeemably corrupt (and how should Scarlatt have become so, in so brief a period?) to prefer those evanescent and meretricious allurements of a courtesan, to the pure tenderness, that exalted what it loved, of a faithful wife! I was not a fool of personal vanity and

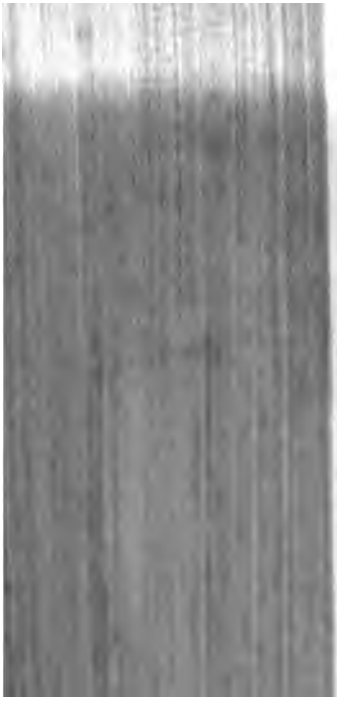
conceit; but I knew that in no external advantage could Sophia be held my equal, much less my superior, in however prejudiced a judgment. I determined, as it were to compel my husband to restore me those wandering affections, dearer to me, as in the parable, for the loss—and which had been so inhospitably driven back from the purple-shining wilds, and precipitous headlands, whither they had strayed.

I determined to commence by an act of submission—by an act I imagined would dissipate a main cause of uneasiness and alienation between us.

Full of these fond and not ungenerous relentings, I conquered the last reluctance of m pride and misgivings, that would continue t haunt my steps, like goblins, and seem to dra them back; and finally made my way to my hus band's private apartment. I sent him n announcement—in my eagerness I did not thin it necessary to make any at the door. I entered He was writing—apparently a letter; but nu merous fragments of predecessors strewed th table; and when he saw me he started u gathered them to him with an air of disma and looked so confused and panic-stricken at m

that I was pierced in a moment with the conviction that Providence had possibly guided my resolution, only just in time to prevent a new phasis of infidelity and degradation on the part of my husband!

My heart swelled nigh to breaking; but I controlled my agitation sufficiently to express to him quietly, my wish for a reconciliation, and my hope in future to remove every cause of dissension between us — commencing with the trusteeship. I had obtained its resignation from Sir Vivian, and had resolved to constitute himself in the place! It was no light sacrifice. My father's lawyers had already expressed themselves favourable to the redemption of our exorbitant mortgage; and I knew that I was thus making over to my husband all that left me the shadow of independence—all that he had been craving for so long—that I resigned myself to all that my father's precautions had been directed to preserve me from! Scarlatt was visibly astonished. He even blushed as with some internal sense of shame. Perhaps he was moved for a moment with some better, more tender sentiment; I saw how his countenance worked; but it was but for an instant. I



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been so pressing and overwhelming—had it been in my power, I may add,—to revoke the deed which I had caused to be drawn up in the most authentic form, appointing my husband my trustee—he would not have found it long at his discretion to execute this ill-timed act of justice, if act of justice it was, to which he had so often refused assent.

Nevertheless, the expression Scarlatt had used relative to Vivian, remained in my memory. I was even so foolish as to derive an unwholesome species of comfort from it!—A wrong, but an inevitable sense of satisfaction in the notion, that if my husband no longer loved me, at least, I exercised upon him some kind of retaliation in the bitter repugnance he manifested to the generous devotion and friendship, hitherto displayed towards me by the noble youth for whom he cherished a causeless, but lifelong detestation. It was this reflection that induced me, when a few days after the scene described, Sir Vivian Ap Howel was announced to me, to give directions for his instant admittance.

To say the whole truth, however, I was so fevered with anxiety and suspense, at what might be taking place unknown to me—for no

tidings reached me now from any direction; and Lord Mauleverer had grown still more profoundly gloomy, and locked up in himself—that I could almost have welcomed a fiend from the abyss, to enlighten me! And up to this period I had found Sir Vivian my only true and faithful friend.

I remember it was a cold winter's day, threatening storm and snow. I had ordered a couch to be drawn near the fire, and was sitting on it reading a book, or rather labouring to fix my attention sufficiently to read it. And that book was George Diamond's last—"presented, with the author's kindest regards and grateful acknowledgments, to the Rt. Hon. the Lord Mauleverer."

I can too well interpret to myself, now, the meaning of that dark quiver on Vivian's countenance—the rolling fire in his wild, fervid gaze; the mockery and menace that mingled in his strange, vibrating, hollow tones—sounding like the muttering echoes of far-off, but baleful and mysterious utterances!

He began, however, much in his usual way. "Don't be too much amazed to see me, Lady Mauleverer! I am come to take farewell of

you for the second time—for ever! You know —if you read the papers—What! reading one of Sophia's diatribes against everybody, and everything?—You know, there are to be battles on the Danube for certain now!—Menschikoff—that haughty prince, whose grandfather was a pieman—has gone off from Constantinople in a huff; and I suppose those who offer their services first, will have the best chance of a Turkish command! So I am going to the city of the Sultan at once—with very good recommendations promised me from the War Office, and my subscription sword blazing by my side!"

I was struck with a strange feeling—or rather, combination of feelings. It seemed to me that I was about to be left utterly friendless and deserted! At the same time a notion, not destitute of some external support, piqued me not a little. "Do you find it then impossible to withstand the fascinations of your Armida—saving by flight almost to another quarter of the globe?"

Vivian stared at me for a moment with a strange vacancy, coloured violently, and starting up from his chair near me, began pacing the drawing-room with a rapid and agitated step!

Not an unusual, though rather harassing movement of irritation and impatience with him.

"Well, Lady Mauleverer, I really do!—I am positively convinced that nothing but flight can prevent me from making a fool or a villain of myself!—I have sailed too near Charybdis, and I must crowd canvass to be off before I strike, and every living soul on board of me go down and perish!" he said, at last, with his eccentric, habitual laugh!

"'Fool or villain!'—Really, Sir Vivian, it is but a small compliment to make you; but if you exile yourself from your native land, from the dread of the worn-out fascinations of the haggish Morgana of the Haunt—you may safely assign yourself the former designation!"

"But I tell you she is not a hag at all, Lady Mauleverer!—or if she be so in reality, she is a sorceress, who knows how to disguise herself in half-a-myriad forms of irresistible attraction! In your presence, certainly, she makes herself look at times—worn, as you say; and sometimes almost as if she had some deadly asp at work at her in secret, like Cleopatra's, under her purple robe, cheating her captors of the best part of their triumph! But the moment your back is

turned, what a real miracle of charm, and—I was going to say—beauty—Sophy becomes! But it is not beauty; she has something more engaging—riveting—than beauty about her!—Stay! you have heard that story, have you not, of the enchanted princess, who was obliged to seem an old woman—hag, if you like—until she could allure some matchless knight to her arms, in spite of her wrinkles!—Speaking modestly so far as regards the chevalier, I think the story must have been told of Sophia and — and myself!"

I was speechless for some moments with amazement—with dread—at this revelation of infatuated enthusiasm!

"With all you know of her artifices, her treachery, her utter depravity—can you speak thus kindly of this detestable woman?" I exclaimed.

"Oh, she has so many apologies! Just picture her to yourself! What a barbarously ill-treated woman and wife she has been! Think what talents she has! What a warm, splendid, glowing imagination!—cast out in the world in the fervour of the passions—you women have passions, too, sometimes—con-

demned to a life either of celibacy or of profligacy by the senseless, merciless laws that make poor Sophy the property of the most hateful and villanous of wretches! Place yourself in Sophia Luxmoor's situation, I say, Lady Mauleverer! Would you have remained so near perfection as you now are, through all her trials and temptations? It is so easy to be virtuous with a husband one doats on by one's side!—children—a castle to live in—and fifteen thousand a year!—quite clear, soon, I suppose. My Lord has sent me some documents to sign, that show you took my resignation in earnest, and did not care to trouble me with occasions of visitation, Lady Mauleverer! Yes, I say, if even Sophy is as bad as she is represented, in her situation a good number of women might not have been very much better themselves, and possess no particle of her talents and redeeming virtues!"

"Sir Vivian! if you come to insult me"—I said, almost weeping with vexation.

"But Sophy is not so bad as she is represented, by a great deal! I know it, and can prove it!" Vivian resumed, interrupting me with a rudeness of vehemence to which I was little accustomed from him.

"You have been to see her, then, and listened to ıer cajoleries! in violation of your plighted word?"

"No, Lady Mauleverer, no!—But—*she has ɔeen to see me*—and I found it quite impossible ɔ escape from hearing what she had to say!" ıe replied, laughing at my gesture of amazed lisgust. "You know, of course, she would grow surprised at my continued absence from Morgana's Haunt—after the distinguished pre-ference she had shown me! But, besides, she ɜent me a direct invitation or two, which I de-ɔlined. In quarrels between friends there is nothing like a little personal explanation—so, as she is above all vulgar prejudices in other things, she showed herself indifferent to opinion respecting the propriety or impropriety of visiting a gay young bachelor, in his own apartments. And this morning early—before the rime was off the grass—I found Sophy had come to breakfast with me openly, in her pony chaise, at Castell Ap Howel."

"She perhaps rather wished the visit to be remarked! It is pretty well known Mrs. Lux-moor is anxious to give her husband an oppor-tunity he might think it worth his while to take, to get rid of her!" I said.

"Well!—all the decrees in chancery *are* going in my favour—I shall be worth plucking shortly, certainly!" replied Ap Howel, quite gravely. "And, according to her own admission, she has devilish good reason to apprehend that Luxmoor is hounding on her track again!"

"What reason?" I inquired, with a chill at the heart—for I thought I knew it already but too well.

"But let me tell it you all in a methodical way—as Sophia told it me over our bread and milk. I offered her coffee and one of Rebecca Caradoc's nicest new-laid eggs—but she preferred, she said, to share my diet!"

And Vivian proceeded, indeed, as he said, in a methodical manner, to relate to me the almost incredible behaviour of the abandoned creature.

Luxmoor, it seemed, she declared—had at last made the discovery—by what means she could only conjecture—of her identity with George Diamond, and he had filed a bill of discovery in chancery against her publishers, to compel them to render him an account of all the emoluments derived from her writings——in his own words, "to disgorge their plunder!"

She knew not whether he was acquainted with her place of refuge, or how long she might consider herself personally safe. But this was the reason, she pretended—according to Vivian, with a blush that attested she spoke the truth! —she was so very anxious to see *him*—that she might consult him on what was best to be done!

"And what was your reply?"

"Upon my life, I hardly know myself to this minute!" he answered, his eyes sparkling with a strange wild mirth. "But, tush! I may as well confess the truth at once! I responded like an idiot—that I could not possibly tell! I had not wisdom enough to guide myself; for I believed I was going abroad to try and get myself brained with a Russian cannon-ball!"

"Well!—and did she not understand you, even then?"

"In faith, she did!—but not in the sense that you suppose! She asked me, quite coolly, where I thought of going; and, when I told her, declared that above all things in the world, she thought her pen would find most congenial occupation in describing the glories and horrors of a campaign! and she actually concluded by

asking me to lend her a hundred pounds to enable her to transport herself to the east, where she might follow in the march of the armies, and describe all that she saw! It would prove a most saleable work, she was sure; and, as she should now be obliged to take a new alias, it would be just the thing to introduce a name favourably to the public!"

I looked at Sir Vivian, fairly petrified. "Good God! and what reply did you make to escape from this strange overture? Surely it cannot be otherwise interpreted?" I said, as soon as I could speak for shame and astonishment.

"You misinterpret her again! I believe she meant precisely what she said! She assured me so!" he answered, smiling. "She is a strange, an inconceivable woman!—she made no secret that she saw what I was *afraid of!*—but asserted that verily her purpose was to follow an army—not a man!—To witness great exploits, and to record them, not to make love or to be made love to!—and really I think she is quite capable of going into the thick of a battle merely to silence the voice of her own heart in the hurlyburly!—and it is, after all, a capital way to do it!

She asked me in such a quaint, peevish way!—'Do you think you are the only person in the world who would be glad to be stunned out of memory and consciousness?'"

"Disgraceful wretch!—she may well desire to forget her crimes, and to lose the dread of the sure chastisement she must apprehend from the justice of heaven!"

"She defends herself pretty well, however, from the majority of your charges against her, Lady Mauleverer!" said Vivian, quietly.

I started. "What! have you raised the crests of the serpent against me? Have you told her what I have revealed to you for your own warning and preservation?" And I really felt a terror glide through my veins, as if I had seen some such deadly denizen of the brake quivering its forked tongue over me!

"I did not name my authority, you may well believe! But you cannot deceive that woman—she named you instantly! As I am a living man, I knew not what else to answer without hurting her feelings too much—and then what an absurdity was it, I did answer! That although I was myself perfectly satisfied she had no *deleterious intentions* upon me!

how could we induce the world to believe so, too, considering all it knew—and all it conjectured of her principles and practice!"

"Did she not die before you of her shame?"

"Not at all: on the contrary, she looked a great deal livelier: her eyes shone up, as if you had stirred a gassy coal in them! And she asked me to tell her, plainly and unreservedly, all that the world knew and conjectured of her principles and practice—and she would tell me, on her soul, how far it lied, and how far it told the truth! Wonderful as this statement was, I could thoroughly believe it of Sophia!"

"And what did she admit?" I inquired breathlessly. "I know what she would deny!"

"You know what most women would deny —but Sophy is not at all a routine girl!—not made after the regulation pattern in anything I'm afraid!" said Ap Howel. "But that is her master-charm, I think! After all, women that are quite the right sort of thing are apt to be little tedious! But nonsense!—what am saying? I must try and not be tedious myself for I see you look impatient, Lady Mauleverer Well, Sophy denied in the first place, and wit

a startling emphasis, I can tell you, all that related to her pretended courtship of Scarlatt Suett, at Plas Newydd! He made wild love to her, if all she said is true!—and there must be a passionateness in his nature which until now I had never suspected!—for, ambitious and greedy as he has always been, he came at last —she declared to me—to such a pitch of frenzy as to offer the friendless, moneyless governess, *marriage!*"

"And you believed her?"

"She showed me the letter—a written document, mark you!—in which he most abjectly begs her forgiveness for the dishonourable objects with which he had hitherto pursued her; and offers her all the reparation that an honorable alliance with his noble self could guarantee!—That was about a month before you strayed to Plas Newydd!"

The stroke of a dagger could not have pierced my heart more keenly than those words. But I dissembled the excess of my anguish. I answered, almost tranquilly — "And she was obliged to refuse the handsome tender, from the trifling circumstance that she was already married to the Reverend Mr. Luxmoor, of Cam-

bridge? I don't suppose that her flirtations *there* would have injured her prospects, had they been the only difficulties in the way!"

"She did not quite deny her flirtations there; but laid all the blame on Luxmoor, who forced a mob of lively, reckless young fellows into her society, whose tone she could not but in some degree adopt," replied Vivian. "But remember! Sophy declares her *flirtations* never passed that word!—and that it was her disgust on that account, almost as much as Luxmoor's neglect and infidelity, that drove her to quit him!"

"So she has told me!—she will say anything; and very young people indeed, believe her!" I said. "But what has she not denied, so far, that the most ordinary of her sex would not?—Wonderful exception, thank God! that she is! — Concerning my father, and my mother's broken-hearted death-bed! what did she say?"

"She confessed she should have been very glad to marry Lord Mauleverer that was! He *suited her*, she said!—Heaven knows what she meant! Perhaps, that he had a title and a great estate! —Yet, though Sophy likes many things that money can purchase, she sets her heart on

others that it cannot! As to your mother, she denies she ever, wilfully, gave her one moment's uneasiness; to use her own sprightly expression, she would have taken a *run down the Rhaiadr Dhu* sooner!"

"And Paris!—did she explain Paris to your satisfaction also?"

"Oh, she went on in a very foolish, strange way about Paris!—she seemed a good deal cut up with that part of the accusation; and said that *was* unkind of you, because you had no provocation, real or imaginary, to speak ill of her there! She cried and laughed together in a most absurd manner—like any other woman!—but the sum was that, if I liked, she could show me a balance-book of all her expenditure in Paris to a sous, with an account of how she came by it, as fair and honest as a merchant's *private* ledger—intended only for his own perusal!—She alluded, I suppose, to the miserable document old Suett forgot to take with him on his flight!"

"Of course! she would omit no opportunity for a reflection on my husband's family!—she don't love *him* much, I imagine, either!—But what does she say to her present pretences of

doing so?—to her glorious attempts to win the affections of a married man—the father of another woman's children?'

"To *retrieve* the affections, you mean, Lady Mauleverer!" returned Vivian, with a dark smile. "Why . . . she repeats the old tale: that it is he who is hankering after her—who imagines he shall never be happy, until, on some terms or other, she is his! But—and buts are important little words!—she admits that you have behaved to her so provokingly, so overbearingly, so gallingly, insultingly—that——she wants, above all things, to be removed from a place where the possibilities of retaliation lie as temptingly to her hand as the thunderbolts of Jove, when he gave over the keys of all his cupboards to Juno to keep, and went courting Semele in a shower of fire!—That is her own comparison;—I, for my part, have forgotten my Lemprière!"

"In plainer words—she has discovered that *you* are rich now; younger than her other wooer; in possession of a bright, unsullied reputation!—and she thinks you would *suit her* better to bring to ruin and disgrace!"

Vivian's cheek flushed. "Let me sacrifice

myself then!" he resumed, laughing in a short, rattling peal like sudden thunder.

"Sacrifice yourself!—what do you mean?"

"To grant the poor soul her moderate request; and give her what facilities lie in my power—to write a narrative of a campaign on the Danube! What do you say?"

"What have I to do in the matter?" I replied, looking at him, with eyes that certainly sparkled with indignation. "Is it one in which a woman of virtue and character—a lady! can be supposed for one instant to have any concern or say?'

"You mistake the thing altogether, Lady Mauleverer!" Vivian returned, still laughingly. 'Strange as it may appear to you, I am certain Sophia means merely what she says! I am to figure in her history, but not in her memoirs! In fact, would you believe it?"—He arose again, and resumed his pacing of the floor—"The strange creature assured me that she did not believe I cared an old stone of the Kerig y Druidion for her! after all the trouble I have taken to convince her that I am desperately enamoured of her! And that I used my assiduities with her, merely as a cover for another and forbidden

passion, which has grown with my growth, and strengthened with my strength, even to this hour!"

I confess there was something in the deep fervour of his utterance of these words, that ought to have struck me more forcibly. But my ideas turned instantly in another direction—or else I could fall upon no better means of eluding the drift of expression I could not affect to misunderstand. "Slanderess!—I perceive all her malignity! It is she then who has instilled into Lord Mauleverer the unfounded ideas that render him even more than usually harsh to me and rude to—to others!—But again, I repeat, what have I to do in this infamous affair? Am I required to prostrate myself before this worst of women, to implore her mercy?"

"I am afraid things have come to just such a pass!" returned Vivian, and he grew flushed as I grew pale to hear what followed. "You don't know all yet!—My Lord Mauleverer is inclined to enjoy himself a little *en grand Seigneur*, now that he has attained the rank of one!—You don't know all, I tell you!—But ought I to tell her all?"

He paused—and standing before me with his

arms folded—it really seemed to me as if my physical configuration vanished from his gaze, and he was talking and thinking of some remote simulacrum of me!

"Ought I to tell her all?—But it will happen, whether I lend a hand in it or not!—And has he not deserved it? And is it not best for us always to know the truth, even if it pierce one's heart with a poisoned knife!—Lady Mauleverer!" he continued, awaking from his strange reverie with a start, "understand this matter clearly!—Sophia declared to me at last—vaunted to me, if you will—on my declaring off the honor she offered me, on the plea that I had sacredly promised you, never even to see her again without your permission!—that she knew you would not refuse it even for the excursion to the Danube, when you are informed Lord Mauleverer accompanied his peremptory request for my banishment from Morgana's Haunt—with an offer of his own entire devotion to supply the vacuum! Coupled—since I have resigned my trusteeship—with the assurance that the ten thousand pounds of your father's legacy shall be the first sum paid out of the funds now placed at his disposal!"

I was silent for several moments with unut-

terable horror, amazement—even terror—at the wickedness thus revealed to me!

I do not well know what I said at last, when I could speak at all; but I believe it was some incoherent raving, to the effect that it was all utterly false!—that the wretched creature had invented this calumny, purely to degrade me in his, Sir Vivian's estimation, and to exalt herself—as one who had triumphed over me in the affections of the vile, perjured man, into whose power she had originally betrayed me!

"Yes; a debt of vengeance is due indeed to her on that account!" Vivian replied, with flashing eyes; "and if you think so, Lady Mauleverer," he added, in strangely soft and supplicating tones, "the means of vengeance are in your power—if this seductive syren really seeks to lure me into her depths!—To be brief and intelligible, Sophia and I came to this decision—that I was to tell you all I have told you!—and then to demand whether or not you will consent to release me from my promise!"

"And in that case?"

"Sophia and I pack this very noonday for Stamboul!"

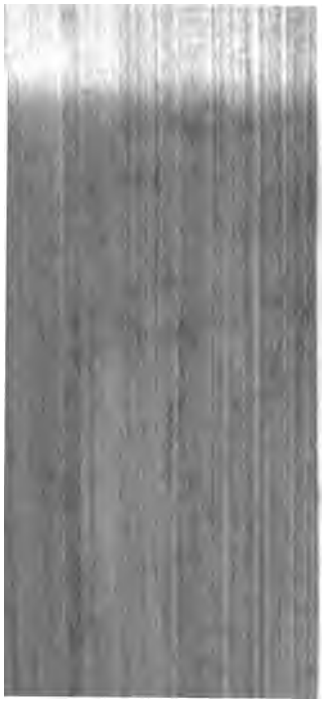
No!—language can never give utterance to the

prodigious tumult of feelings in my heart at these words! I will disguise nothing. I know not myself what, amid all that chaos of contending and terrible passions, dictated most my reply: it was a combination perhaps of all the direst, maddening impulses of a woman's outraged love, pride, sense of propriety, honor, decency—a sentiment of the warmest, tenderest friendship—what shall I say? This I answered. "I do *not* consent to release you from your promise! I exact from you its observance to the very letter!—If it depends upon my decree, never, never, never again shall Sophia Luxmoor and Vivian Ap Howel meet!"

His whole countenance shone up with joy.

"Yes, once again!" he exclaimed, in tones of wild, ecstatic relief; "I did not dare to hope—to fear this resolve, I mean!—And as human nature requires some substitute for the reality of happiness—I had agreed to take your decision to Sophia in person!"

"Take it then!" I replied. "And with it my utter defiance! Bid her do her best or her worst against me!—But come back as speedily as possible to assure me that you have finally and irrevocably escaped from the witch's sorceries!"



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CHAPTER IX.

A CLIMAX.

I REMAINED alone—and alone I desired to be. I wished to savour the full sweetness of this draught of revenge I was raising to my lips. I wished to make certain that there would be no interruption to my acquiring the earliest tidings of the result of that momentous scene. I felt, moreover, that I could not restrain my feelings if I saw Lord Mauleverer. I did not consider any other possible inference to what I resolved upon—or perhaps any inference at all!—I therefore sent him word to his apartment that I was very much indisposed, and desired to dine alone. He sent me for reply, that *that* would suit him very well, as he was busy making arrange-

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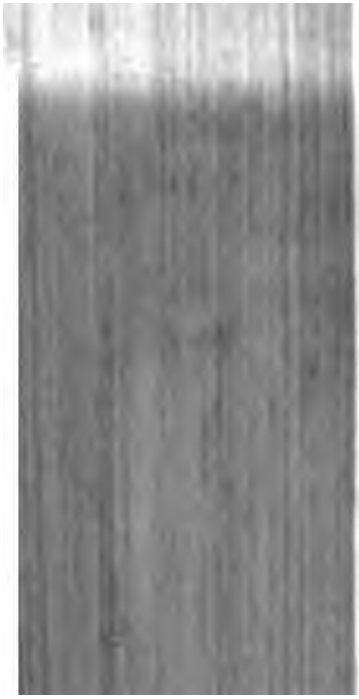
sidered necessary for the going and return of my agent in the work; and it was not until the interval began to grow protracted, that these raging thoughts stilled themselves in some degree, and I had leisure to contemplate the subject under another of its aspects.

What vengeance would she not take or propose to herself? And how could I elude the probable reaction of her rage and despair—the rage and despair of a woman, scorned by the man whom she evidently preferred—who had in her power the husband of the woman by whose decree this prodigious humiliation and disappointment had been inflicted?

Terror seized me! I could not doubt what kind of vengeance was in store for me! And the thought returned upon me with emphasis that there could be only one chance of safety for me; and this was to bring Luxmoor again upon her! I determined, since Mrs. Suett's indirect informations had produced so little result, to write to him myself a full relation! And I resolved to stimulate him to exertion by declaring to him the rich legacy to which his wife was entitled! It diverted some portion of the anxious time I had still to spend, to write this



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But I am not the master—and no one considers me so!"

No doubt I showed some signs of the violent emotion throbbing and beating in my breast as I answered, "'The fellow' came—came to say that he was going abroad—and should shortly call to take his farewell of us all! As to the letter (and I own I may have looked a little guilty and confused when I remembered its real contents!) it *was* for town—and I don't know of any commission which you can execute there for me, unmentioned in it!"

Lord Mauleverer made no further observation on the subject, excepting that the country could well spare even so great an ornament to it!—and taking a very cold farewell of me, set out, as I supposed, on his journey.

My ideas instantly reverted to the subjects of anxiety that had previously possessed them. It almost seemed to me that Sophia must needs have been victorious in the struggle—that her prey had yielded himself up to the fascinations which so many had found irresistible! But I cannot describe all the agony of that suspense! It tasks no great powers of moral analysis in any of my readers to conceive very easily how it was

that the thought of the singularity and even impropriety of Vivian's repeated visit, in my husband's unexpected absence, never once occurred to me! I had no other feeling but that of satisfaction, amounting to joy, when at length I heard the approaching hoofs of a horse through the darkness of the winter night—and I knew well the tramp of Sir Vivian's wind-matched charger, Rhaiadr Dhu!

He entered—looking excessively harassed and fatigued, his wontedly wildly careless black hair scattered still more disorderedly under his military cap. "Where have you been so long?" I exclaimed, before the servant who showed him in, had time to leave the room. "I have been expecting you these three hours!"

"Is Lord Mauleverer at home?" he inquired, abruptly.

"Why do you ask?—No! he has gone to town."

"Upon my life then, I think, I must have passed his wraith not half an hour ago, as I came out of the furze plantation, behind Morgana's Haunt! I took it as the shortest way to Mauleverer, but you know very few people care either to come or go by it. There was a driving storm of wind and snow at the time, and I was

galloping from my own thoughts, which are rapid pursuers, good faith !—and he was pelting along on foot, like the winner of a pedestrian race ! But I think I could not possibly be mistaken in him, for he made a visible stop as we shot past each other ! But when I looked round, a few hundred yards ahead, he had vanished ; and whether the ground had swallowed him or not, I did not think it worth my while to inquire !"

A terrible—an overwhelming suspicion struck me as I listened. "He has but feigned this journey then to London !—or he has come off of it to renew his adulterous proffers more unexpectedly !"

"He will find Sophia in a suitable mood to receive them !" Vivian replied, hurriedly. "We parted like two devils that have quarrelled for a soul !—I have been obliged at last to *reject her* as plainly as ever woman rejected man !—and the upshot is, she says she will not fall again into the power of her husband, happen what will—that she is certain he has hounded her out, and intends to make a spring upon her, ere long !—that she has only to make the least sign to your husband to bring him to her side !—and so, since you will not permit her to find a protector

in me, she will seek one for herself in a man who has always in reality loved her so well that—that he *has never ceased to persecute her!*"

"Merciful heaven! and do you really believe that it could be Scarlatt whom you met?"

"I am certain of it, since you ask me thus solemnly!—and that he was going a road he already perhaps knows full well!" replied Vivian.

"But it may not yet be too late to save him! I will go at once to Morgana's Haunt before she can have time to wind her spells inextricably around him—to subdue him wholly to her wicked will!" I said, almost in a state of frenzy, and rising as if to put my purpose in immediate execution.

"Be quiet, for God's sake! It is already too late, Lady Mauleverer!—it is hours since I met your husband, within a crow's flight from nest to carrion, of the Haunt!" Vivian replied, throwing himself between me and the door.

"And you have had the infamous cruelty not to return at once and warn me?" I shrieked in my agony. "O my God! and am I betrayed and given over to my enemies by the only being in the world whom I deemed my friend?"

"No, Lady Mauleverer, no! I took a more

effectual means to serve you—a means you have yourself procured to be at hand and in readiness! Sophia's husband—Carolus Luxmoor—has been lurking for weeks—perhaps for a much longer period—in the neighbourhood of his unhappy wife, with two or three London detectives, in the disguise of country clowns, to obtain at last decisive proofs of her guilt with Lord Mauleverer! I knew it—for I recognised his satyr visage through all his mufflers and smockfrock, in which he intended to pass as a railway navvy—on a chance occasion, as he was boozing in the Wranghams' bar—where he seems as much at home and welcome as of yore! I told him where I expected he would find my Lord Mauleverer earthed at last—and he is off with his whole pack of viewhounds to the Haunt!"

I looked at Vivian thunderstruck. "It is a conspiracy, then, to expose my husband's ignominy to the world, which your hatred has contrived, inhuman man!" I exclaimed, as soon as I could recover speech. "But still I may not be too late to save him from the atrocious plot you have perhaps concocted with Sophia herself! Luxmoor would wait until he imagined

his victim was thoroughly in the toils—it is scarcely five minutes' run between here and the Haunt—miles between there and Llanhowel! I shall be in time yet to foil ye all!"

"Stay, Lady Mauleverer! you shall *not* go on this errand! Nay, dearest Hugh-Helena! do but listen to me for a moment—hark how the wind howls!—see how the ghastly snow is wrapping all the landscape in a shroud!—would you hazard perhaps your life abroad in such a night, to save two wretches who hold you in scorn and detestation; and who perhaps at this very moment are laughing over your agony?—Nay then: wrench out my heart if you will, and throw it to your dogs—but beyond this threshold you shall not pass while I have power to restrain you—even thus!"

And before I could in the least imagine that such could be his intention, Vivian had thrown his arms around me; and, while I was rendered mute and stupified with astonishment and indignation—yielding doubtless to the ascendancy of the fierce passion so long stifled in his fiery nature—Vivian clutched me to his heart, and devoured my gasping lips with his frenzied kisses! I had but just regained my utterance

—but just regained the power to rend myself partially from his arms—when the door flew open, and Lord Mauleverer—accompanied by his favourite valet and two or three of the upper servants, including my own woman—broke tumultuously in.

What a cruel Medusa's head is surprise! I have no doubt that for a moment both Sir Vivian and myself—the offender and the offended—looked equally petrified, equally convicted of offence! Lord Mauleverer himself was a fearful spectacle! He was bloodlessly pale, as he was ever wont to be on the few occasions of vehement internal commotion in his nature which I had witnessed. But, great God! there was almost a smile of something nigh akin to malignant satisfaction on his countenance as he surveyed us!

"You see them!" he observed, with a gesture to the servants. "Recollect what you see!—I understood that your ladyship was severely indisposed when I left for town—but I am afraid I cannot trust—you sent word to that effect by the messenger I saw on my way towards Castell Ap Howel before my departure!—I have been then correctly informed, Sir Vivian,

that you would repeat your visit here this evening, when I was imagined to be on my way to town? But not being able to credit the intelligence concerning a youthful hero, who is already the glory of his country, and a lady of such virtue that even the comparatively innocent indulgence in a little freedom of speech on the part of another compels perpetual banishment from her society—I have come in person to ascertain the reality of the fact!"

"You make but one slight mistake in your statements, Lord Mauleverer! I happened to be aware, as I passed you on the way, that you had stopped short in your journey, to make your adieux in pretty close propinquity to the castle at Morgana's Haunt!" Vivian retorted.

"And thither—since this castle is not sufficiently my house, it seems, to enable me to enforce the order I had given that you should never set foot in it again, Sir Vivian Ap Howel —thither I return. My friend and neighbour, Mrs. Luxmoor, will be willing, I doubt not, to give me a few weeks' accommodation until I can ascertain, in a legal manner, who is the master, and who the intruder, in these halls!"

Lord Mauleverer turned, as if to leave the

apartment on these words. Up to this period I had been silent—absolutely unable to utter a sound—struggling as under the pressure of some frightful nightmare agony! But I could speak—could move at last! I had burst towards him—had seized the arm that repulsed me—and I shrieked, in accents that rang through the chamber like the cry of some poor wretch under a murderer's knife! "No, no, no! O Scarlatt, Scarlatt! by all the love that has been between us!—by our children's innocent beauty! —do not believe that I have wronged you—that I am capable for an instant of deceiving you! Circumstances—appearances—the madness of this unhappy young man—condemn me! But it is a plot, a conspiracy of that dreadful woman, to entangle us all in perdition! Do not desert me, do not desert me, for her who values you not—who would within these few hours have followed the fortunes of another, in any extremity of danger and discomfort!—who has even shamelessly offered herself to Vivian Ap Howel, as once long ago she offered herself to you! O my husband, my husband!" I continued, and frantic with grief, and fear, and love, and jealous frenzy, I threw my arms

around him, as if to detain him by my powerless force—straining him convulsively to my heart, as I repeated a thousand, thousand times, "Do not desert me! do not desert your children for this vile woman's sake! Husband, lover! dearest, dearest, Scarlatt! be true to me as I swear by the Almighty Father of Truth I have ever been to you! and we shall yet be happy—yet be happy! when this wicked man and wicked woman have removed their black shadows from our souls!"

He shook me off as if I had been some loathsome thing of the serpent kind, that had wrapped him at unawares in its folds! He flung me away from him with a force that sent me reeling to a considerable distance from him, almost to where Sir Vivian yet stood with his arms folded, looking on with apparent indifference. This latter made a slight mechanical movement, as if to open them; then closed them still more rigidly on his breast.

"Your wife, Lord Mauleverer, speaks merely the exact truth—and if you had human faith within yourself, you would believe in words like these!" he then said, in quiet, firm accents, that rung as clearly as if he were using the

most ordinary speech. "I do, for my part! Unworthy as you are, I see that she still loves you, as she has always loved you—the better for your unworthiness!—If you have any fault to find with the part I have taken in endeavouring to bring Lady Mauleverer to a surer comprehension of your demerits, I shall not quit Castell Ap Howel until I perceive I can be of no further service in the affair! And, meanwhile, Lady Mauleverer! let all present interpret it as they may, I declare before heaven your perfect innocence of any share in the rashness which has been so shamefully perverted by a man eager to exhibit to the world what would be his own deepest dishonour—and will await whatever commands you are pleased to send me at the same place!"

"Take them now! Leave me, leave this country for ever!"

I had but just uttered these words with a frantic gesture, almost as if I spurned him from my presence, when a cry like the cry of a banshee sounded from the open staircase, and a female figure, in what appeared to be actually a suit of nightclothes with the coverlet of a bed thrown in disorder over it, which was glistening

on the edges of the pattern with snow; with naked feet, cut and bleeding; hair streaming in wild disorder around her neck and bosom: with terror, anguish, all the madness of flight from some overwhelming danger in her eyes—rushed in among us!

It was Sophia!

In her own frenzy of excitement she did not seem to observe the astounding nature of the scene upon which she had broken. She grasped Lord Mauleverer's arm, who attempted in vain to stay her, but perceiving me, flew at once past him, and actually cast herself on her knees at my feet. "Do not say so—do not fear so!—she will not reject me in a moment like this! My Hugh-Helena will not refuse the protection which no human being—no woman—could deny to another under such circumstances! I ask shelter from the worst of usage—almost from murder! Lady Mauleverer! Luxmoor has arrived—has broken into my house with a band of ruffians, armed, as they pretend, with the power of the law—he has dragged me with indecent violence from my bed—ransacked all my repositories—overwhelmed me with threats and abuse, and a declaration that he will compel

me to return a prisoner with him to his house in London, until he discovers who are my paramours!—and I have only escaped at the risk of my life, with the aid of my faithful Swiss, while, burglar-like, they were solacing themselves with the contents of my cellar and larder! But they are on my track, the bloodhounds! Oh! save me, save me! Do not surrender me to my merciless husband!"

All the sufferings I had undergone within so brief a space; all the indignation, fury, despair in my soul, boiled up like the lava of a volcano, as I listened to these words! And I fairly spurned my suppliant, and answered, in tones that must certainly have been audible to a very considerable distance—"Ungrateful, infamous woman! and is it to me you come for refuge? Quit my house this instant, in which your presence is pollution—and since he alone of all the undamned of mankind, is worthy of you, return to your husband! This is my house; quit it, or I will have you turned out of it by the hands of my menials! This is my house, I say—the house of my ancestors—the house where my mother perished of a broken heart, whose last and deepest stroke was in-

flicted by you! Quit Mauleverer Castle, Sophia Luxmoor—or, if there be a servant in it who will obey me yet, you shall be cast out of it!"

"Come then, Sophia! Come with me, under my protection! Do not debase yourself by kneeling to a woman whose disgrace those menials she appeals to have witnessed, and whom I repudiate henceforth and for ever as my wife!" Lord Mauleverer said, raising Sophia in his arms with every sign of tenderness and compassion. "Do not be afraid, I say, for from this hour to the close of my existence, *Scarlatt Suett* will prove your faithful guardian and protector, come what come may beside!"

"But he is here!—Luxmoor—Hark, he is here!" gasped Sophia, who had continued to gaze stonily at me, as if blinded by some heavy pressure on the brain. The great hall-bell rung as she spoke, with a peal that seemed to make every chamber in the castle echo.

"I will admit the Reverend Mr. Luxmoor, and our party will be complete again, as at the Kerig y Drudion!" said Vivian, darting out of the chamber before any one could attempt to

intercept him. In scarcely a moment after, he reappeared, in company with that fearful man, and three or four persons disguised as countrymen. His blotched and swollen countenance, bloodshot, glaring eyes, and strange disguise of a dirty smockfrock and slouched straw hat—the huge club rather than cudgel in his hand—gave Luxmoor the most ruffianly look imaginable. But his horrible facetiousness had not deserted him. "So, my beloved spouse, my literary Dulcinea del Toboso!—is this the way to receive a husband after so long a separation? But I can very well understand why you look so prettily abashed, and shrink from my glowering Othello glances!" he continued, laughing at Sophia's look of unutterable dread and horror. "And true it is, my Lord Mauleverer, I am in possession of all your pretty little *billets doux* to my immaculate wife, and am at last in a condition to prove myself a hart royal to the satisfaction of the most experienced in antlers Doctors' Commons can boast. But don't alarm yourself, my lord! and get the better of these tremors, my wise and witty Sophy! Within this hour, I have found out that you are worth *ten thousand pounds* to me as my wife—and I

won't part with her, Right Honourable Sir, at a maravedi less!"

"What do you mean, Mr. Luxmoor?" said my husband, evidently panic-stricken at the mention of his letters, doubtless discovered in rummaging out Sophia's apartment.

"You know what I mean; and, besides, I have it under your lady's own writing and signature, that the late Lord Mauleverer, her father, left my wife a legacy of ten thousand pounds, which she is willing to pay, and which I now claim as husband and owner!" returned Luxmoor, laughing, and flourishing the identical letter which only a few hours previously I had written and directed to him in London. How it could have been intercepted by him I could not imagine; but, petrified as I was, I felt a gleam of consolation in the conviction that I could have done nothing more calculated to effect my wishes and object. What appearance that I had done would wear in other respects I was too confused at the moment to gather; but I saw that Sophia gazed at the document and then at me with a mixture of incredulity, horror, despair, and rage in her eyes, that might in any other moment have appalled me!

"There is nothing for me then but to appeal from men to my God—to take refuge in the most unfathomable of his secrets, death—rather than remain in the power of the man who calls himself my husband!" she said. "But, no!" she added, in a low, breathless tone—as if awe-stricken herself with the cruelty and abominable treachery which, even at that moment, I cannot doubt, formed itself duskily, as a fiend from the seething cauldron of a witch, in her mind—"no! I will live yet to take awful vengeance for this barbarous betrayal!"

"There is no love lost between us, *cara sposa!*" said Luxmoor, imagining the menace addressed to himself. "I only take possession of your somewhat *passés* charms—as my friend, old Nick, of Russia, would phrase it—as a *material guarantee* for my ten thousand pounds. Be so good now as to place yourself under my care for a metropolitan trip, or I shall be obliged to request these Scotland Yard rurals to use a little soft compulsion to soothe you into my post-chaise at the gates."

"I am ready! Let us hence, since fate will have it so; but whosoever of all mankind rescues me from this hideous thraldom commands

the devotion of my whole existence!" were Sophia's words, and I saw her eye wandering round upon Scarlatt, like the stealthy lamp-ray that lights an assassin to his victim's heart; but mine arrested it on the way.

"Why do you not renew your appeal to Sir Vivian Ap Howel? He has, perhaps, not *rejected you* finally, Mrs. Luxmoor!" I said.

What a terrible glance she gave me! The fire of revenge shone up in it: hatred glowed at white heat all over her visage as she answered me.

"Well, Lady Mauleverer, war to the death, since you will have it so! Shame, disgrace, ruin to you, as you and yours have heaped it upon me! So, I take these living coals you cast upon me, and throw them back to you on the whirlwind you have yourself raised! Since you challenge, provoke, defy the worst, you shall learn that, in spite of all the advantages that are yours—beauty, wealth, name, fortune, health even; for, though you profess your incredulity, death is busy with me as I speak—I will triumph over you by the supremacy of mind, and make you drink to the dregs of that infernal cup, which the order from which you

sprung has commended to the lips of all who have not wealth or power to compel redemption from the horrors of that fate whose utmost verge of desperation I am now driven to! Scarlatt! do you desert me--or may I hope yet to be rejoined by the only friend and protector I have now left on all the earth?"

"You may; I quit this polluted abode now and for ever!" my husband answered.

"I cannot well offer you a seat in my post-chaise, Lord Mauleverer; but I and my wife, I am sure, will be glad to see you in town! As soon as the ten thousand are punctually paid—a few thousands more in the way of damages will not come amiss!" the jeering monster, Luxmoor, said. "My lady, it seems, is quite willing I should have my rights, but the Suett-Pomeroys are of a thriftier cross! Come, my accomplished bride! the partner in my French academy—the intelligent Madame Le Crampon, 'elevated above the prejudices of her sex,' as she assured me, when we parted on this adventure, she felt herself—will make you very welcome! Come, gentlemen mole-catchers! you are regular bricks; but I will soak you like sponges at our first baiting-place to-night."

He clutched Sophia's hand, and drew her arm violently in his own, though she made no resistance, and moved to the door, jumping and frisking to the joyous, villanous tune of "Nix my dolly, pals!" which he himself hoarsely rollicked as he went. She only looked back once: it was at me! To this hour I cannot decipher the fearful enigma of anguish, rage, hatred, tenderness, compassion, and relentless devilry, that shone up in her countenance as she met my parting glance. This was the last time ever our eyes met—or ever, methinks, shall meet again, until we encounter each other at the bar of eternal justice!

I waited with a strange calm to see what Scarlatt would do. The moment Luxmoor had disappeared with his prey, he followed in the steps of the official myrmidons, without a word, without a look at me—at any one!

In a few instants I found myself alone with Vivian, who remained immoveable in the attitude I have described a few pages back.

"Are you satisfied now, man?" I said, a tone so weak with the exhaustion of suffe that it sounded strange even to myself. " you satisfied? You have given them th

text they have long sought! Now leave me to my despair!"

"I will leave you for ever, Hugh-Helena!—or stay with you for ever, as you shall command me!" he replied, in the like accent. "There is nothing I will not do to repair the consequences of my error—of the madness of a moment, which has betrayed the secret of my existence—a secret I proposed to carry with me to a grave I had determined the swords of the enemies of human liberty and progress should dig for me on the Danube! Consider me now as a desperate wretch, willing to do your bidding, if it were to plunge into the boiling crater of a volcano!—and dispose of all I am or may be."

"You can do me but one service—but one kindness, Sir Vivian," I answered. "Follow this woman; I am sure she prefers you to my cruel husband!—and be you the rescuer she invokes from the thraldom of those wise and merciful laws which have vainly striven to protect the homes of other women from the blasting influence of one who has deserted every duty with her own!"

Ap Howel stared at me aghast—only for

a moment. An expression of wild, vindictive passion suddenly lighted up his whole saddened and desponding countenance. "Oh, but you have loved—but you love—this Scarlatt Suett!" I heard him grind the words between his teeth as a hungry tiger grinds the ribs of an ox— "But, do you believe," he continued, fixing his fierce and yet sorrowful eyes upon me as he spoke, "that a man who has ever truly loved you, could love such a woman as Sophia Luxmoor—could sacrifice all hope ever to behold you again, to become hers?"

"Thank God, then, thank God!" I exclaimed, deliriously, "I am saved. Scarlatt loved me once—and he must still love me! He cannot have forgotten that I was the first love of his youth—that I am the mother of his children!"

"You are mistaken. As far as love at all can exist within your husband's heart, he loved Sophia first—and always!" returned Vivian. "I am content to abide by the issue of the events in progress: you will soon learn whether he prefers not Sophia Luxmoor to the mother of his children!"

"Leave this house!" I shrieked, "and never again dare to re-enter it!"

"And leave you—perhaps to your husband's unmanly violence! He is a coward! Your sex will invite his cruelty!"

"I will tell him that you said so—and he will spare me!"

"Do so. The Kerig y Drudion is still where we left it some ten years ago. Tell him, whenever he wishes to see Vivian Ap Howel on the subject, a word will bring me there!"

And, with a look of mingled indignation and despair, he passed me—strode to the door—and disappeared.

I remained for hours after, fixed alternately in a stupefaction of grief; alternately giving vent to every imaginable expression of rage and despair—every sentiment of an outraged woman's heart, in which love, and hate, and jealousy, and crushed pride, hissed and writhed in every direst form.

CHAPTER X.

PURSUIT.

It seemed to me now that I could breathe again. I had dismissed Sir Vivian with a contumely that would prevent him, I hoped, from ever again desiring to see me. I had made it so much worth Luxmoor's while to retain his wife, that there was good cause to expect she was irrevocably consigned to his custody. Ah, me! the delusive hope smiled upon me, like a ray of light from amidst the piled-up thunder-clouds, that all might yet be well! I persuaded myself my husband must now be convinced of the danger and disgrace, if not of the wickedness, of his projects! I was so thoroughly aware of my own innocence, that I could not imagine any real

doubt of it existed in his mind. What he had exhibited was feigned as an apology for his own infidelity! Or if he really entertained the suspicions Sir Vivian's improper behaviour might for a moment justify, I would see him, and explain all with the irresistible sway of truth! What other proof, indeed, was necessary than that I had banished the offender for ever from my presence, for a momentary failure in the respect he owed me?

But where was my husband to be found? It was impossible to think he could have left the castle in the company of Luxmoor and his captive wife, and the London officers! To Morgana's Haunt?—I would follow him thither, instantly! I rang the bell. A servant appeared, who stared at me with insolent curiosity. But my mind was too intent on other subjects, to notice this change; a remarkable one, for I inherited my father's hauteur of manner to inferiors, and exacted from all who approached me the respect I had always been taught to consider due to my rank and station. I asked for Lord Mauleverer; and, to my inexpressible relief, ascertained that he had retired to his own apartment in the castle.

I hastened thither. I knocked at a closed outer door. There was no response. I tried to open it. It was locked within. I called my husband by his name, begging admittance in those of God and of our children! I told him I came to offer an explanation which it would be impossible for him to disbelieve; that I forgave him all! No answer—but a smell of burning paper came to my nostrils when throwing myself on my knees at the door I repeated my expostulations and entreaties in every form I thought likely to move him from his stubborn silence! I comprehended then what he was at!—arranging for his departure—getting rid of superfluous, perhaps of compromising, documents! I redoubled my supplications almost to shrieks; yet all in vain. At last, a new paroxysm of rage and indignation took possession of my heart. I cried aloud, that he should *not* leave the castle without an explanation! That I would remain at his door until I perished rather!

And I did stay at that cruel, that relentless door all night! Scarlatt heard me sob through its long hours, pacing like the sentry of despair on his threshold; heard my constantly renewed entreaties—and remained deaf and inexorable as

the solid oaken panels that derided, with hollow echoes, my frantic efforts occasionally to break in to him!

I have but a confused remembrance, as of a horrible and tormenting dream, of the events of that dreadful night. My soul was athirst with suspense, fevered to its inmost depths with fearful expectation; sometimes abyssed in a sense of utter powerlessness to ward off the insufferable calamity threatening me; at others, fired to madness with the resolve to prevent it at whatever cost! I should have preferred the most violent and furious demonstration to that implacable silence! How I listened to the chime of the hours through the darkness of that horrible night, from the great hall clock of the castle, which had measured out the time of five generations of my ancestors! With what sickening eyes did I watch the slow break of day — its faint increase — till the whole sky became flooded with red and golden light, and it seemed impossible my husband could any longer delay coming forth!

At last I heard a movement in his apartment. The key turned in the lock—the door opened—and Lord Mauleverer's English valet appeared,

pale and gaping as if he were about to step out to his execution.

The menial was right to dread the encounter with me! A number of trunks lay about the room, arranged for departure; and rather than face me—rather than listen to my true exculpatain—rather than be forced to believe what left his own guilt without a shadow of extenuation —Scarlatt Suett had escaped from the castle he had been so anxious to enter, as if a raging fire had driven him forth! He had made a rope of torn blankets and counterpanes, and descended, at no little risk of his life, from his window to the filled-up moat below!

He had been gone for hours—so Thompson stammered out—with the addition that he had orders to follow his master instantly, with his luggage. I inquired, with a strange calmness, whither? To the continent—to Paris—the poor rogue said; but I saw at once that he lied. It was to London—to the rescue of that detested sorceress! I forbade him—in terms that made every fibre of his sturdy body quake—to dare to remove a single article unless his master returned to enforce his commands in person! I sat down on one of the trunks to watch that

my orders were obeyed; neither the valet nor any other of the affrighted and wonderstruck menials dared to cross me in this mood.

Will it be believed? For three days and three nights I never left that chamber, nor closed my eyes from constant vigilance. I made certain Scarlatt would return to claim his property. I cared not if he returned to my utter destruction, in revenge of the opposition offered to his will!—His valet must needs have rejoined him in that time, but still he came not!

At last a thought pierced my excited brain like a dart of fire! Scarlatt concludes I have broken into his baggage; and he has left evidence of even worse guilt than yet I imputed to him behind—conscious of which he dared not return to face me! I resolved to ascertain if this was the true solution of the enigma. I had his trunks wrenched open—I ransacked them all.

One box—an iron one—was full of papers. There were hundreds thrust in, labelled in a manner that showed they related to our most momentous pecuniary concerns. I scarcely glanced at them ere I flung them aside. But I seized, with the clutch of a tigress, the epistles

which I recognised in the cruelly clear, calm handwriting of Sophia!

What miracles of craft and subtlety those letters were; from the very first of the series, dated from Plas Newydd, years, years before, evidently in answer to several Scarlatt had written to her, without obtaining a reply, from Cambridge! Yes, their correspondence extended so far back! But how easy it was to see through all the pretended coldness and discouragement in these letters! How they abounded in reality in all the most inebriating allurements and stimulants of passion!—among which you might easily see she had used even the difficulties arising from the disparity in their rank and position—the wealth and pride of his family, and her own poverty and inferiority of condition! Who can doubt it? She affected constantly to dwell upon these facts. An acknowledgment of her marriage with Luxmoor would have been decisive; yet this was never made—never once even hinted at! I for one doubted no longer—and I maddened over the further conviction that if Sophia had thrown out the first baits of attraction, Scarlatt had swallowed them with most ravenous

and gudgeon-like avidity! But what was there besides, still more decisive, still more overwhelming?—A numerous batch of letters from Morgana's Haunt—answers to those addressed to her by my husband—at first on literary and political subjects, truly! Sophia was a politician, too!—she was all things her victims desired to find in her! Yet—for I will be just—there was nothing in all these replies of hers to convict her of absolute criminality. It was only evident as the light, that she excited, fed, encouraged by all the most seductive artifices, my husband's reviving passion for her into the frenzy it had reached! Indeed, I almost myself ceased to wonder he had been betrayed by steps so imperceptible—as an angel might down such a path of sloping sunbeams—into a cave of destruction! Glowing with eloquence, with tenderness, with all the pathos of a glorious but wasted existence thrown into the chalice of a vain passion—Sophia's very repulses had in them a more voluptuous charm and fascination than the yieldings of other women! Paradise—a paradise unattainable!—I comprehended, as I maddened over the syren strains, why it was Sophia was *not* so guilty as she might have

been! It was not virtue—it was no sense of honor or of gratitude—that had kept her, in a merely physical sense, unstained! She knew the capricious, easily satiate heart of the man she had enthralled, and that had she consented to be all to him that he demanded, she would soon have been nothing!

I will not, I cannot say, what I became on this perusal, which supposed so much of soul-criminality on the part of the correspondent, my husband! A perusal evidently so endeared to him that he had incurred all the risk of preserving these frightful monuments of duplicity and depraved genius!

I no longer doubted in the least now but that Scarlatt had followed in the footsteps of Luxmoor and this dreadful woman; and that he and she alike would discard all further restraint under the circumstances in which they were placed. Therefore it was I determined to hasten after them, without a moment's delay, to London; and on my part to do all that lay in human endeavour to prevent the completion of a crime which would render my children worse than orphans—myself a thousand times more desolate than widowhood could make me!

And yet in the absorption of my agony, these very children themselves—I scarcely embraced them!—certainly shed no tears over them—when I parted from them that day, leaving them only in the charge of a few scared domestics, whom I imagined still faithful to me. But little dreamed I then that I gazed on their angel visages—as I may almost say, for the last time, or that parting were yet to make! I only said to them that I was going to bring them back their father. These were simple words, but the nurses sobbed when they heard me utter them.

Meanwhile that something was wrong at Mauleverer, was well known all over the country. I had already refused myself twice to Mrs. Suett, who, in spite of her quarrel with her son, drove over to the castle, on two separate occasions, after his departure, to ascertain what was amiss. I desired my servants merely to state to other inquirers that the Miss Jones of Morgana's Haunt was in reality the wife of the notorious Carolus Luxmoor—that she had been seized by her husband—and that mine had gone to London to ascertain the fate of *our friend!* Even frenzy has its cunning, and I must still

have cherished a hope that the mischief which had happed was not irreparable.

If the craftiest of inquisitors examined me, I could not at this hour relate by what process I got to London. I have a strange, whirling recollection of a succession of vehicles that bore me along—but how procured, how discharged—though I went to town quite alone—I cannot say. I would not even suffer the attendance of my woman, who had been called in by my husband to witness the wrongful interpretation he had laboured to put on my interview with Vivian, and whose pert and familiar manner subsequently completed my disgust.

On my arrival in London I hastened at once to Luxmoor's house. I found it with little difficulty, being in possession of the fact that he called himself by a reversion of his name at his westend quarters. I scarcely noticed that people seemed only to recognise the establishment as that of a *Madame* Moorlux, who kept a boarding house for ladies. I had forgotten the character bestowed by Sophia on her rival's real occupation, in the form of an insidious sneer. Or rather everything had ceased to be of consequence to me, but the attainment of the great

object I had in view. I thought for certain I should ascertain the whereabouts of my husband from Luxmoor—and whether I might still confide in his custody of Sophia. I believed I had the means of strengthening him in the salutary resolution in which I had last seen him.

Externally, Madame Moorlux's residence was perfectly orderly and respectable. The door steps were elaborately whitened: a large brass plate on the portal was inscribed ostentatiously with her assumed name; a verandah, painted of a bright green, on the drawing-room floor, was decorated with evergreens in pots: every appearance announced habits of neatness and decorum. When I rang the sonorous hall bell, the door was opened by a grave-looking man in a plain livery: there was only something a little sinister and sly in his expression, perhaps due to a slight squint. This man never looked you directly in the face; but you felt that he took in a full and perfect view of your characteristics, by some process of his own, at once. The result in my case seemed dubious. He raised his forehead in a singular succession of wrinkles, and seemed quite amazed when I inquired if Monsieur Moorlux was at home, and gave him

my card to deliver. After a moment's thought, however, he said he would ascertain, and disappeared. Very shortly afterwards, I heard the rustle of a silk dress; and, instead of the master of the establishment, beheld the mistress come sailing down the stairs, attired in all the elegancies of the Parisian mode, and diffusing the scent of several essences from her dress and fine laced handkerchief. I do not of course speak of Sophia, but of my *ci-devant* model governess, Madame Le Crampon! I recognised her instantly, looking as stonily fleshy as ever, only a good deal more rouged and wrinkled than of old, and wearing a wig of black hair that seemed plastered immoveably to her Chinese forehead.

I had the meanness, in my anxious desire to conciliate intelligence, to extend my hand to this woman. She took it barely with the tips of her own, curtseying in the old régime style as of yore, almost to the oilcloth on which she stood. She affected, in fact, not to know me; but by the pursing of her cruel lips, and the vindictive gleam in her bad-minded eyes, I saw she recognised me instantly.

"I have not de honneur to know Madame!—

Miladi Mauleverer?—I should once know her, but she is dead, hélas! and I am myself *ignorante* —Milor Mauleverer . . . is he again . . . *en secondes noces*—married à une si belle et jeune Miladi?"

"You must have learned from Mr. Luxmoor, that Mr. Pomeroy and myself have succeeded to the title, madame!" I said. "He will know me, at all events, and I beseech you to let me see him!"

Madame Le Crampon's evil expression deepened as she answered, "My name is Moorlux, madame, not Luxmoor!—that is my husband's name to him also! But if madame desires to place herself on my *pensionnat*, there is no need of any intervention. Mon Dieu! I have also others de la première qualité—and an *appartement* at this moment which is at the devotion of madame!"

"You have forgotten me then, Madame Le Crampon?" I exclaimed, perceiving that it was absolutely necessary to conciliate my detestable exs-gouvernante. You have forgotten your pupil and—and *friend*—Hugh-Helena Pomeroy?"

"*Qu' entends-je? Grand Dieu! que vois-je? Mais c'est donc bien elle!*—It is she—it is

my child, my *pupille! véritable* Helène de beauté et de malheur! Ah, let me press her once more to my heart—once more overwhelm her with the caresses of a mother of the infant prodigue!" And in spite of the faint resistance I ventured to offer, Madame Le Crampon darted on me like some animal of the feline species, and seemed to draw me to her in her claws, to devour! She only, however, embraced me most voraciously!

As soon as I could rescue myself from this display of cordiality, I repeated my request to see Mr. Luxmoor on the most important business—business the nature of which I was assured Madame must be too well aware!

"Ah, my poor shilde! my dear shilde! my charming Miladi!—Hélas, but did I not predict to you but too truly the consequences *désastreuses* of that miserable mésalliance? Did I not do all in my power to save you? Watch over you *de jour et de nuit?* But all is in vain, our destiny must fulfil herself always! —My poor shilde! why should I have any secrets from you more? Yes, my poor Carolus is at home—he is upstairs in his chamber; but, mon Dieu! in what deplorable condition?

Alas! he has feasted himself too profusely on this journey of capture of that *detestable* woman!—he and the members of the civil force who attended him!—*Delirium tremens*, maladie terrible, which already he has twice escaped, has made a cruel seizure of him! Four strong men can hardly keep him in his bed!—*Ecoutez*!—do you not even now hear him?"

Too plainly I heard him! The yell of a maniac resounded through the house from some upper apartment, uttering the words, "Water, you devils!—bring me molten lead, if you will, but something to drink, I say!—Where's Demogorgon?—Let him pour the sea this way when he is bringing chaos back again!—I'll drink it dry!" And Luxmoor's well-known tones roared out, at a frantic pitch, a succession of what sounded like Greek tragic verses!

I was struck with dismay. It was almost in a breathless whisper I inquired, "Where then is his wife?—I mean—you know who I mean, madame!"

"Do not call her his wife! It wounds me! On that point only I am yet susceptible! Innumerable infidelities otherwise have not touched me!" replied Madame Le Crampon. "My

God ! how is she then his wife ?—She whom a man loves, whom he prefares, whom he returns to after a thousand wanderings—she is the wife of that man ! Ah, and do you demand in a voice that trembles rather with pity than with rage, *sur cette femme atroce*—whom you have as much reason as myself to deplore, to hate !"

"I have, madame !—I acknowledge it !—I merely asked to be assured that she is in safe custody."

"In safe custody !—Ah, ah ! why should I dissemble anything longer from one whom I love so well ? my pupille of formerly—who has so much reason to detest her also ?—In safe custody ?—when she is in MINE !—But enter an apartment ; let us talk together in all private. We are one—our objects are one ; let us speak like two sisters, who are cheated, reviled, betrayed by a creature so detestable, of the same sex !"

Madame Le Crampon threw open the door of a parlour, as she spoke, and motioned me in. Three young women, of very prepossessing, ladylike appearance, and beautifully dressed, who were gabbling in French together over some needlework, rose as we appeared, and seemed to

wait the commands of the hostess with every sign of deference. "Retire, *mes filles*—Miladi and I wish to be alone!" she said, in the same language. "Madame est obéie!" one of the girls answered; and all gathering up their work and materials, instantly quitted the room. Not, however, without some sidelong glances at me, and an exchange of looks of surprise with one another.

Alone with Madame Le Crampon, she seemed, in her own expression, "no longer to have any reserves for me!" I found that she was perfectly well acquainted with the particulars of Sophia's capture—and either knew or suspected the rest of the complications attending it.

"*Creature indigne! execrable!* worthy of all condemnation!—what she does to me in depriving me of my lover, by the most infamous *coquetterie*, such she repeats to you with your husband!—It is but too plain!—thrice in one day, since she is here, Milor Mauleverer arrives to implore of Luxmoor one five minutes' interview with that vile opprobium of our sex!—to assure himself that she is well treated—to assure her she is not abandoned! My dear professeur refuses. What, shall he also be blamable of

condonation? shall he assist the betrayer of his honor?—He upbraids your husband with his treachery, in concealing the ten thousand pounds —in striving to rob him of his rights—and refuses him to deign the least answer—the least assurance, until, as a necessary preliminary, he places that sum at our banker's, to my dear friend's account! Milor goes away in distraction and despair; but, ma foi! I believe it is that he may comply, at every sacrifice, with the requisition of my *sagace* Carolus!"

I was stung to the quick of the soul. Can he get the money? flashed as the most tormenting of queries on my mind; and of a sudden I recollected that I had made over to my false husband full power over my father's legacy—that all that had ever belonged to me was now his—landed and funded property alike!

"He will use it to redeem his paramour!" I groaned aloud. The only consolation that occurred to me was, that the prospect of so large a ransom was the best possible security, in the interval, for the detention of Sophia. There might yet be time, yet means found, to recall my husband from her fatal lure! I inquired where she was placed? whether it was

quite certain she could not effect her escape? Madame Le Crampon replied with a shrug and a smile, and a significant gesture at a wooden outhouse I perceived in the yard, behind the main building, which in the more flourishing times of the street might have been intended as a stable. "She is besides tied to an old manger!—it is *lawful*, he has all power! She is *his wife*, you know, who strives to escape with a paramour!" my hostess said, and with that hateful leer. I would not, I dared not inquire any further; my soul sickened, but I felt convinced Sophia was in safe custody!

"At present let us talk of another affair!" Madame resumed, in a pleasant, chatty manner, satisfied that I understood the meaning of her byplay. "Let us understand each the other, ma chère Miladi! It seems to me, then, that I perfectly comprehend your game. I also, I tell you, am weary of all this!—Figure how many years I am insulted by that word 'My wife, my wife!' Always she is his *wife*!—do what he will against her, murder her almost: still it is *my wife* I rob; *my wife* I beat; *my wife* I imprison!' I do not like to hear her called *my wife*!—You are weary to call him your husband,

that veritable real mushroom, sprung of the dirt of commerce! You have your objects, my dear pupille; I also have mine to me! *I* will be *his wife* at last — he *shall* divorce her — though he pretends she is worth so much more to him as *his wife*, than any damage he can hope! Ah, miladi, you must be in possession of evidence sufficient, in company of those precious letters. When we receive the ten thousand pounds, we let her escape, if she will, to Milor! We bring our action for damage — five thousand more. We dedicate a portion of this sum to complete the divorce; and as your husband and Luxmoor's wife will be exactly culpable the same, you also obtain your divorce, and are free to marry again. No longer this time a miserable *canaille* of a *roturier* of a manufacturer.—You marry a nobleman, a gentleman, a hero who adores you! a soldier, in fine, worthy to count among the *preux* of that detestable *Empire* of the older Bonaparte!"

This suggestion, which convinced me how far the fearful calumny respecting me had spread, lighted me up into a flame of indignation. "Do not dream for one moment, Madame

Le Crampon!" I exclaimed, "that you will find in me an accomplice in such an attempt! It is not in the power of man to sunder lawfully those whom God has joined! And even were it so, deem you I will play the very part my enemies would most desire I should; and be myself the means of in some measure legitimating their criminal proceedings? But I will not believe—never, never!—but that my husband will yet listen to the voice of honour and duty—recognise what he owes to his position in society, and return to his children and his wife!"

"Ah, for that, you read his letters to your rival, miladi!—Who would have thought a parvenu of the *nom ridicule* of Suett, could have all the fire, the tenderness of Jean Jacques, in his expressions of a devouring passion? Ah, were such letters had been addressées à moi, myself, attached as I am to my poor professeur —I know not how I should so obstinately sustain my rôle of virtue as she for cunning has do!"

"Let me see these letters!" I said, in an agony of jealous curiosity I could not stifle. "I have the counterparts, which you shall see in return! And perhaps the documents in your

possession may persuade me to the step which at present I abhor and shrink from."

"You shall see them!" Madame replied, eagerly. "But I cannot at this moment procure them. Luxmoor keeps an invincible hold of them through the whole access of his delirium, saying that they are an anchor to prevent anybody from setting his slaves free not to work! Alas, he imagines himself at times, not the husband, but the owner of that woman, whom he calls his white niggeress! Hitherto no drug has had power to procure him repose; but to-night we shall increase his dose, and without doubt the papers will surrender themselves to my disposition. Come, and you shall see them!"

"And Lord Mauleverer?" I said. "Can you give me any information where he is to be found?"

"I should not betray a confidence of the sort even if I possessed it—but I know nothing!" replied Madame, with her toad-like smile.

The thought nevertheless struck me that it was extremely probable Scarlatt would repeat his visit of inquiry and solicitation at some period of the day—very possibly in the evening.

It was the hope of lighting upon him by some chance of this kind, far more than even the eager desire I had to ascertain the worst that was to be known from the inspection of the documents in question, that made me consent to Madame Le Crampon's proposition. It was agreed that I should return about nine in the evening, when, under the regulation of her own presence, and a solemn promise to respect "the rights of Sophia's husband!" in them, I was to be allowed to peruse the effusions of my husband's unlawful passion to its object.

Madame Le Crampon and I parted seemingly very good friends. She escorted me to the door, possibly rather as a measure of precaution than as a mark of respect. Yet I thwarted what was most likely her purpose, by openly addressing the porter, and informing him that I would give him ten guineas if he could discover the abode of a gentleman who had called lately three times at the house. And I described Lord Mauleverer's person to him in a manner that I perceived he recognised. The fellow seemed now to comprehend the case! A jealous discovery relating to some visitor to the unhappy inmates of the house! He pro-

mised me his adhesion with a heartiness which doubtless received an efficient rebuke from Madame Le Crampon the moment I quitted the threshold.

CHAPTER XI.

CHEZ MADAME MOORLUX!

When I returned in the evening, I was received by my polite hostess with even an increase of cordiality. She showed me, as she informed me, into her own private apartment, in order that we might be secured from interruption. It was a little closet of a sitting room, communicating with a bedroom of about the same dimensions—admirably adapted to her tastes by the circumstance that a stifling party wall ran almost close up to the only window in it. There was, besides, a large fire: decanters and cakes stood on the table, in company with a withered nosegay of exotic flowers that had possibly graced the opera some weeks previously.

It was thought, I suppose, I should need stimulants to support me in my investigation! I refused a repeated and very urgent invitation to that effect, while Madame, alleging the shattered state of her health from attendance on her dear professeur, in his alarming state, filled herself quite a tumbler-full of brandy and cold water. She then produced a bundle of letters, in a handwriting which I recognised at a glance, prefacing that no quantity of laudanum appeared to have any effect on Luxmoor; but that he had voluntarily resigned these documents on being informed by Madame Le Crampon that it was in reality a nest of scorpions he was keeping in his grasp, the venom of which, being absorbed into his blood in the contact, made him feel so fiery hot and ill!

She sat down opposite to me, sipping her liquor, and watching me throughout with her round, green, cat-like eyes, in the full enjoyment of my sufferings.

There were a great many letters. I read them all.

I read them all, though at times the sight vanished from my tearless, burning eyeballs! He had never written or said aught to me that

gave me the least notion he possessed feelings so impassioned, so earnest, so overflowing with tenderness—that could inspire language so fraught with the power and pathos of expression I found in those dread documents! I comprehended, as I read, that Sophia was in reality the only woman my husband had ever loved! and that his love had remained, and would remain, the master-passion of his existence, the key to all the strange inconsistencies, contrarieties, vices, and failure of his career!

With Sophia he might have been happy—with me he had always been unhappy! It was not permitted me to doubt. These letters recalled to her incessantly—often with upbraidings and bitter regrets, but oftener in language of profound sadness and despondency—that it was she who had induced him to sacrifice the reality of happiness to false views of interest—that he had always loved her, and her alone! Incessantly my husband declared the cause of his failure in political life was to be sought in the want of all sustaining stimulus in my society—in the profound discouragement he had felt, from the moment when he forfeited hers, in every object and pursuit of existence! His

very revenge and perfidy against her—as he himself styled his former persecution — were but expressions of a devouring love and jealousy, which would not suffer him to allow her to have even a chance of happiness with another! So long as he knew she was chained to one whom she did not love—with whom her existence was, like his own, destitute of every charm—he could the better endure his fate!—was not tormented with reflections so odious and bitter, in the consciousness of the irreparable loss he had sustained.

Not satisfied, I say, with these wailings of a repining passion for another, my husband plainly intimated feelings not easily to be distinguished from absolute contempt, and even hatred, against me, his unhappy wife! He ascribed to me qualities of pride, of domineering insolence, of folly, of envy, of jealousy, of which I certainly never dreamed myself to be possessed. My temper was declared to be intolerable, violent, unmanageable, unreasonable; my whole demeanour apparently designed for the alienation of all who approached me! I was accused of despising Lord Mauleverer for his birth, and the other accidents of his early posi-

tion! I was denounced as having made the brilliant promise of his outset a nullity—first, by depriving him of the finest years of exertion, the consequences of our runaway match; then, by the abortive or slow fulfilment of the hopes he had been led to entertain, and the wretched state of dependence on my implacable family into which I had either led or forced him. My extravagance, my haughtiness, my repulsive demeanour, concurred subsequently to thwart my husband in his progress—to overwhelm him with petty cares and pains that consumed his time, and deprived such natural abilities as he possessed of all spring and elasticity! Had he married Sophia, he avouched, the obstacles to be encountered would have animated and braced, instead of chaining and depressing all his energies!

Dark hints were interspersed, which did not yield me the consolation of believing that Scarlatt had ever loved me sufficiently to be jealous of me; but made me aware that he wished to excuse his own conduct, under the imputation that my affections were in reality devoted to another—and that other a man whom he looked upon as his own bitter and detested enemy!

Finally, there was a crowning and overwhelming insult conveyed in the last letter of the series. Sophia received it but a few hours before Luxmoor reclaimed her. In this my husband declared that my temper and conduct towards him had become totally unendurable—that—calumniator!—he even doubted my fidelity towards him, and was convinced, at all events, that my affections were devoted to Vivian Ap Howel! and he concluded by announcing a fixed determination to effect a final and complete separation from me, and by an offer of the love and devotion of his whole heart and remaining existence—in defiance of the cruel laws to which *she* had subjected him—to herself! But, whatever her resolution might be, Scarlatt assured Sophia now of the possession of the large legacy bequeathed to her by my father. He had only desired, he shamelessly avowed, to keep her poor, to guarantee himself against the renewed efforts of her husband's rapacity, and an independence and freedom of action which would have conferred upon her possibly the power to leave him for ever *alone!* Sir Vivian Ap Howel's accession of wealth, he said, which alone could render him formidable,

should no longer furnish him with advantages in her poverty, and the pressure of necessity under which she might imagine herself to have fallen!

What I felt—what I became—as I read these evidences of unmatched perfidy and falsehood, it would be of little profit now to relate. Madame Le Crampon watched me with her cold glass eyes sparkling tranquilly in the light of the fire, as she sipped her intoxicating beverage, reclining perfectly at her ease in an arm-chair. She remained altogether unmoved with the most heart-rending expressions of my grief, and indignation, and despair, excepting that from time to time she bore a kind of burden to my lamentations, in the words, "*Tenez, ma chère Miladi!* but these *mésalliances* end always in a mutual misery on both sides."

Nor was this all. Madame Le Crampon retained a lettter in her own hand, which she plainly declared she did not like to venture, "in the power of my despair," inasmuch as it was Mr. Luxmoor's most substantial proof of his wife's being entitled to a legacy of ten thousand pounds from my father! She, however, read it to me; and in it my father expli-

citly declared he had made his will exactly as Mrs. Luxmoor had pointed out to him as most suitable, in his daughter's favour, *since she refused, so solemnly and decisively, the gift of his entire personal property, which he desired to make her!* But he did this on condition that, after his death, she should at least accept the home she had refused during his unhappy lifetime, and a small portion of all she declined, barely sufficient to keep the "Haunt" in order, in the form of a sum to the amount stated above!

"Ah, and you hesitate any longer, *belle Hélène meprisée!*" Madame Le Crampo n cried, observing my look of wonder and horror at the revelation. "Ah! and will you not also aid my poor professeur, as soon as he has secured this legacy, to get rid of his *indigne wife*, by ridding yourself of your *indigne* husband, who prefers her?"

Maddened with grief and disdain as I was, I yet answered, without an instant's hesitation, "Never!—never will I suffer the triumph of that perfidious woman! Never shall she take my place as the lawful wife of the man she has infatuated to such an excess of cruelty and

calumny against me! Never become the mother of children who shall have the right to inherit his name, and, perhaps, to disinherit mine of the wealth the betrayer owes entirely to me! I will die a thousand deaths sooner! and I will prove to all the world my innocence of these atrocious suspicions, by renouncing the only possibility that can exist of my ever being aught to Vivian Ap Howel but what I am and have always been — an admiring and affectionate friend! No more!"

Madame shrugged her shoulders impatiently. "Ah, bah! we understand these affairs, we other Parisians! What do you expect? that we should believe such stuff as this? Milor has explained all to Mr. Luxmoor!—how you are surprised with Sare Vivian, at Mauleverer, when you imagine the husband on his way to London! Mon Dieu! when without scandal we can follow our pleasure, whyfore should we not? And know you not, if you do take the initiative not, you will find yourself in the position—disgraced, *infâme*, pilloried by public exposure—in which I would prefare to see—Ah, ah—'*his wife!*' It is a real madness of *amour propre*, and of the most deplorable

égöisme on your part, to wish to retain a man who despises you, with all your *beauté merveilleuse! Grand Dieu! qu'est ce que cela?*"

This latter exclamation was occasioned by a peal from the street-door knocker, that made the whole house reverberate.

"Is it the drunken marquis?" my vile hostess muttered. "But, no!" she continued, in a tone of elation, "it is, without doubt, your husband, Miladi! He brings, possibly, the ten thousand pounds as a preliminary of negotiation for the release of his *charmante Sophie!*"

"Bring him to me—let us conclude this tragical farce! Let me but see him once more, and if he turns still a deaf ear to my entreaties—to my forgiveness—to the recollection of his children—I, too, will become of marble! — inexorable to every human sentiment!" I gasped, sinking in my chair.

Madame snatched up the letters. "I will descend—I will ascertain!" she said, thrusting them into a pillow-bear, in which she had brought them. "But my poor professeur will begin to miss his documents! Adieu, for some moments. Ah, ah!—the explication between yourself and Milor may as well take place here

as in a place less adapted for an explosion of the sort!"

She left the room, and I remained alone for several minutes, expecting, with indescribable agitation, the results of the admission now evidently granted to the new arrival below.

I heard footsteps on the stairs, double-paced with impatience. I thought Madame Le Crampon had allowed herself the diversion of leading my husband to expect that he was to be admitted to Sophia's captivity! My blood curdled at the idea—the light forsook my eyes, and I fainted.

When I returned to my senses I found myself placed on a couch, with Madame Le Crampon holding a bottle of the abominable *vinaigre aromatique* to my nostrils—a man bending over me with an expression of the most intense anxiety on his features. But this man was not my husband—and I nearly swooned again when I recognized Vivian Ap Howel!

"There! she revives; and I leave you to an *eclaircissement* in your affairs, which will, I hope, dissipate the scruples, infinitely ridiculous, of Miladi!" said Madame Le Crampon; and she was about to quit me, when I started up, and clutched her back with a convulsive effort. "You

shall not leave me alone—alone with this gentleman!" I gasped.

"What are you afraid of, dearest Lady Mauleverer? I have only learned by the merest chance you were here; though I own I followed you up from Wales, fearing some desperate project on your part, and guessed whither your frenzy would conduct you. Gracious heaven! and do you fear the man who would die for you?" Vivian exclaimed, and tears—real tears—gushed in a dark shower from his eyes on the hand with which I repulsed him from my side, and which he seized in both his own.

"Leave me; I ask no more of you! Why do you pursue me to my destruction?" I sobbed.

"Miladi is inexorable! In spite of these proofs of an infidelity of heart infinitely worse in the eyes of a veritable sentiment than any of body, she persists there shall be no divorce for her!" said Madame Le Crampon.

"I know it already!" Vivian replied, flinging away my hand in turn with an explosion of rage and despair. "She prefers a villain who detests her, to all who love and honour her! But I will not leave you, Lady Mauleverer," he continued, in calmer, but resolute tones, "until you

are fairly out of this detestable house—where your life may be in danger from the adhesion of its wicked inhabitants to any plan which your husband may contrive against you! Are you aware of its real character, and of the infamy of the people surrounding you? Do not be angry, Madame Le Crampon; one must speak the truth sometimes! I came in the hope—in the dread—to find this unfortunate lady here; and I will not leave it until I have rescued her!"

"Both of you leave my house this moment, deplorable *egöistes!* persons destitute of every *bienséance*—without rationality or comprehension of what the situation exacts from you! Quit my house, and may Milor, *son mari*, whom I expect this moment, witness your exit in society! That will be decisive, *je crois*, if my house merits the *imputations grossières* with which you load it, monsieur!" Madame Le Crampon, yielding to an exasperation she had for some time suppressed, almost screamed these words.

The idea she started struck me with panic, more especially as Vivian, clenching his teeth, muttered between them, "Let him come! If we meet, we will not part so easily as at the Kerig y Drudion, again!" But just as I was

about to declare that I would leave the house instantly and alone, we heard a loud uproar and trampling of feet in the room above; and before we could form any distinct notion of what the cause of the disturbance could be, a servant girl rushed into the apartment with every sign of consternation.

"Ah, Madam!" she exclaimed, "Master's gone regular furious mad now, and says he knows the devil's com'd for him with that thundering rap at the door a few minutes ago! And he says the gents that are watching him are set there by his wife, to keep him all tight till the Old un comes up and grabs him—and he's a trying all he can to throw them out of the window!"

"Pardon me for a few moments—I must increase his dose until I tranquillize him! *Mon Dieu!* mad or no, he dares not dispute with *me* —dares not disobey *me! Pollie, ma bonne fille,* bring me the extract of opium from the table." And Madame Le Crampon hastened from the apartment, closely followed by the servant girl.

The tumult in the chamber above quieted almost the moment she reached it!

This man, of ferocious and indomitable pas-

sions to all others, was evidently in the habit of yielding to the ascendancy of his hard paramour, since she controlled him even in the raging of delirium!

The certainty that Ap Howel would accompany me, and dread, under the circumstances, of encountering my husband, stopped me in my first motion to follow her out of the room, and quit at once this mansion of infamy. But Ap Howel would not have suffered it. Unless at the risk of an actual physical struggle, I almost think, it would have been impossible for me to leave the apartment, until, as he said, I had listened for the last time to the accents of a true devotion from his lips—of a love that had always preferred my honour and happiness to every other consideration! And it was true, and I knew it. But I did not willingly await this forbidden revelation. I remained, because I hoped that by assenting to hear finally all that Vivian could urge in behalf of himself and of his projects, and pronouncing irrevocably against them, I might be rid for ever of the dangerous and compromising subject.

I confess that I was moved—deeply moved—by the poor youth's fervid confession of the un-

changed absorbing passion he had always cherished for me, from the first hour when we met, a girl and a boy, at the fatal Kerig y Drudion! Had I been a stone I must have trembled to hear that he had exiled himself solely on my account, for so many years of his still young life, on finding, in spite of all his efforts, that day by day his abortive love had gained in strength and intensity.

Could I avoid being troubled in all the depths of my heart—that heart so cruelly and recently lacerated—by the heroic young man's declaration that all the deeds he had wrought in the east were the result of the desperation and recklessness of life his unfortunate passion inspired, or of the hope that his recollection would thus be forced back upon me by the lustre of the glory he achieved? Was it not necessarily an exquisite balm to my hurt and bleeding heart, to learn that the fidelity of this unhappy love had never for a moment really wandered from me—that Vivian's pretended attachment for Sophia was founded merely on the need he felt for some means of diverting attention from his real absorption, or perhaps the vain hope that her strange fascination, so irresistible for others,

might exercise a counterspell to the frenzy that led him on!

Vivian had no need to represent to me the generosity and regard for my welfare he had exhibited under circumstances the least likely to elicit such sentiments. My memory abundantly recalled them. He scarcely alluded to these incidents in our career; but he dwelt with a violence of exaggeration to be expected, on Scarlatt's long course of unkindness and ill usage towards me—his preference for Sophia—his mercenary motives from the very outset of our relations—and, in conclusion, the acts of contemptuous desertion and indifference he seemed to propose to crown with the basest calumnies, and by giving himself over entirely to the dominion of a rival who had all along been my evil star, and the shadow of all my happiness!

I listened to him patiently, interrupting him only with the sobs of a heart which I imagined even then to be breaking in my breast.

But when he concluded by assuring me that if Luxmoor brought an action against my husband, it would in all probability not be opposed, both Sophia and he being willing to withdraw

her from his ownership at every sacrifice. That however unjustly disposed towards woman's claims to an equality of rights, in general, parliament could not commit so flagrant an act of partiality as to refuse me a divorce from my husband after it should have granted one, through his guilt, to Luxmoor: when throwing himself at my feet, Vivian implored me to consent to this arrangement, and accept as a recompense the entire devotion of a heart that had never for an instant ceased to worship me, and of the great possessions which a final decree of the law courts had confirmed to him. Then, I do confess it, there arose a struggle in my heart, which for a time rendered me speechless.

I knew now that I had never been loved by my husband—and that I had always been the idol of that high, and chivalrous, and constant heart, which thus poured its tenderness like a precious oil over all my bleeding wounds. And I was loved as I had always most desired to be, for myself only! I could now discern an heroic disdain of all other considerations in Vivian's having permitted my husband's final absorption of my inheritance! Rejected, despised by a man who confessed his career of selfish ag-

grandizement a failure, Vivian placed the rich blazonry of his renown at my feet, and was ready to proclaim to the world that he had achieved all for my sake only! But I protest, in the face of heaven and of man, that I yielded not to the temptation!—that in the fierce furnace of that trial the firmness of my principles withstood the utmost raging of the flame—that I came forth victorious from the strife!—I rejected my unhappy lover's offers as insults—and I declared my irrevocable resolve never to consent to a divorce from the husband who had probably provoked me to the verge of madness to obtain by that very resentment the objects of his own unhallowed wishes! I told Vivian, happen what would, I would never consent to violate what I deemed to be the law of God, by accepting a divorce, which men, in my opinion, had no power to pronounce, and marrying another man in my husband's lifetime. I endeavoured to soften my refusal, indeed, by acknowledging that I believed in the sincerity of his love—that he alone had ever loved me—or was worthy of the devotion I had wasted on an ingrate! But what kind of recompense would it be," I said, with bitter tears, "for so much generosity, to

bestow upon him the wrecks of a mind, and heart, and person such as mine were now?" I told him, in fine, that I believed marriage to have all the *rights and efficacy of a sacrament;* and that I would never consent to place myself on a level with Sophia Luxmoor, by constituting myself a *legal adulteress!*

Vivian grew absolutely frantic when he found all his arguments broken like water on a rock against this religious conviction and determination. He let out all the fury and scorn of his soul against Scarlatt; he accused him of every species of baseness—of personal cowardice even! —He raved against myself at last, whom he denounced for superstition, for a revengeful egotism, or the poorest meanness of spirit that induced me to submit to intolerable wrongs, and still to cherish an insane attachment for a man who despised, who spurned me!

I grew frightened at last with his vehemence, and I was aware that time was passing rapidly —that it was growing late, very late—that I was alone with a man accused of being my lover, by my husband, in an apartment of a house whose externals of decency did not protect it from the most scandalous reputation. I had

pronounced again and again the most absolute refusal of all his despairing proffers. I was insisting finally on my right and resolution to quit the house unaccompanied, and return to my hotel, when the door opened, and Madame Le Crampon re-entered.

"*Tenez, Sare Vivian!*" she said, flourishing a paper in her hand, evidently in the full flush of some recent success, "I bring you an agreement that should have assurement some influence with Miladi Malevrier! Behold! an order on Milor's banker to pay my dear professeur his ten thousand pounds in three months from this hour! And know, moreover, that as I am not myself so inexorable as Miladi to the prayers of a real tenderness, I have been prevailed upon to permit the escape of the *charmante Sophie* with this generous and devoted Milor, while you are absorbed in your foolish *entretien* here! *Mon Dieu!* time was not given us for nothing —and fortunately Milor does not arrive with an *annonce de tonnerre*, like you, Sare Vivian!"

I gazed at the evil woman in petrified amazement. Had it been for my life I could not have uttered a sound! After a moment's pause Vivian turned to me with an expression of

the tenderest compassion. "You hear, Hugh-Helena!" he said: "and do you still reject the love which opens its wings for you, and is now your solè refuge in the world?"

I had rallied by an effort which to this moment I still consider supernatural. "There yet remains to me justice—vengeance! and I will make it the sole business and object of my existence henceforth to attain them! I will pursue these betrayers, if need be, to the ends of the earth, and proclaim them everywhere the guilty wretches that they are!"

"Miladi must lose no time then, certainly!" said Madame Le Crampon, with ironical gaiety. "They are embarked these two hours of her *entretien* for Boulogne. I heard the order to the postboy; 'the Boulogne packet stairs!'"

"And Luxmoor—your paramour, vile woman! shall know the part you have taken in the transaction!"

"I go with this step to inform him—if he is awake—but I had to calm him with a strong dose, vraiment, while I effected this negotiation! —Let me dare to hear him complain—to express admiration for her talent again—that is all!"

And flourishing her promissory note, or bond, or whatever it was, with a countenance flaming up with a vengeful, jealous expression, Madame Le Crampon strode imperiously out of the apartment.

I moved towards the door. Vivian once more placed himself in my way. "Am I a prisoner?" I inquired, desperately.

"No, no; but whither, dearest, would you go with this pale, resolute look?"

"To Boulogne—to the extremities of the earth—to denounce them to all mankind!"

"I will aid you in the pursuit, Hugh-Helena! but do not look and speak so wildly! You will need protection—for they are desperate now!—Go when and where you will, if you allow me to accompany you!"

"If you offer to follow me a single step, I will demand the protection of the law, or strike some weapon to your heart with my own hand!" I returned.

"I care not!" he replied. "I will never leave you!"

"Dare to obstruct me in my way—" I began to retort, when struck with the full consciousness of my desertion and impotence, I burst into

an hysterical passion of tears and sobs. Vivian folding his arms, gazed at me moved, but for some moments irresolute.

"Go then," he said at last, in a softened, broken tone; "and go—since you will it so—alone! I will return to Plas Newydd, and marry Bronwen Suett!" he added, with a wild, derisive laugh, "Her mother thinks I ought, since she is in love with me!—All the world don't despise me, you see—though there are two of you who prefer such a fellow as Scarlatt Suett!"

"You could not do better than marry Bronwen Suett!" I answered, hardly knowing what I said; and I was about to leave the room, when on a sudden, Madame Le Crampon made her reappearance. She came into the chamber, singularly enough, since she must have heard us in vehement altercation, from the exterior, on tiptoe. But she looked so affrighted—her red sandstone complexion so drained of its colouring—that we both stared at her for an explanation, without the utterence of a single word to ask it.

"Come upstairs, Sare Vivian, one moment, if you please! He has grown so cold—and he sleeps so profoundly—I—I am afraid I have

given him too much sedative to compose him, because I knew he would resist my plan to set *his wife* free! He had not yet tormented her enough, he said; but I dreaded her reviving influence!—Mon Dieu! que deviendrai-je si je l'ai tué, mon cher professeur."

"I will waken him with the news of what you have done! Were he dead it would waken him!" I cried—and rushing past Vivian and the aghast Frenchwoman, I made my way, as you make it, over all opposing obstacles, in a delirious dream, to the apartment above, occupied by Luxmoor.

I recall the scene with fearful distinctness! A dreadful stench of brandy and laudanum—of all ill odours, as it seemed, combined—greeted me when I threw open the door. The window was closed as if to confine more effectually this miasma of disease and debauchery; and the only light in the room was from the gas-lamps in the street below. Two or three rough-looking men, whose business in the sick chamber had been to restrain the frantic movements of the patient, stood staring stupidly round his bed. The servant girl, sobbing and blubbering, was rubbing the feet of the dead man—for dead Luxmoor

was—a glance certified the fact. The yellow glare from the street fell full upon the bloated and livid outlines of the visage—the gaping, frothy mouth, the open, protruding, meaningless eyes—revealed the stiff arm hanging to the ground from the bed; and even I, a rare spectatress of the tragedies of life, knew that I gazed upon a corpse!—Vivian followed in my steps—felt at the silent heart for a moment, and turning to me, said, in a low, aghast voice—"Sophia Luxmoor IS A WIDOW!"

Madame Le Crampon uttered a loud shriek, and threw herself on the body with all the demonstrations of the most frantic grief. "Ah, it is then I who have killed him, my poor professeur, *mon cher Carlot*!—Let one send for the officers of justice—I desire to surrender myself—to die.—I have killed him!"

I stood like one unconscious.

"Come, Hugh-Helena!" I heard Vivian whisper; "this is no place—no scene in which you ought to be known to have played a part. Take my arm—I will lead you forth in safety!"

I neither acquiesced nor resisted. I was completely bewildered. I suffered him to remove me from the presence of this horror—how I

scarcely knew—but I found myself standing in the grey dawn with Vivian Ap Howel on the steps of that evil-haunted house. He was hailing a cab. We got into it together. The squinting porter assisted me in with a strange leer of the most anxious curiosity. A crossing sweeper, on the way to commence his labours, touched his tattered hat dubiously at us as we passed him. A policeman stopped, stared, turned his bull's eye, light as it now was, full into the cab upon us—took its number carefully. "Don't she look queer?" to this moment I distinctly remember hearing him say to the sweeper. "Mother Moorluxs too!—really looks like a hocussing case!—I must keep my weather eye open here, you—what's your name?—*you've seen it too!*"

The cabman inquired where he should drive. Vivian looked at me. In the tumult and confusion of my mind one idea only predominated. "The Boulogne packet stairs!" was my reply.

CHAPTER XII.

THE LAW OF DIVORCE FOR WOMEN, A.D. 1857.

THE Boulogne packet had sailed two hours previously. Vivian had expected this, and imagined I should then be convinced of the uselessness of my pursuit. But it was quite otherwise. In the interval I had recovered my powers of understanding and will. I perceived the utter impropriety of the companionship to which he subjected me. I was not cajoled by the profound respect and distance of his manner—his avoidance of every subject that might have renewed my irritation. I told him plainly that I was about to proceed to Boulogne by the next packet, and that if he persisted in forcing

his company upon me I would apply to a magistrate for protection. He looked at me earnestly, after I had uttered this resolve—drew the driver's check—wrung my hand—leaped out of the vehicle—and disappeared.

I desired the man to stop again at the first hotel he reached. Having determined to follow the guilty fugitives in the next packet, which was to start in a few hours, I wished to remain in the neighbourhood of the wharf.

I arrived at Boulogne, but again too late. The fugitives had not delayed an instant, they had gone on to Paris. I ascertained this fact clearly through the description I received from a railway office-keeper, who had been struck with something remarkable and agitated in their appearance. I was myself, however, detained for some time—a whole, priceless hour—by the necessity of procuring a passport, which I had not thought of in London. But no obstacle could turn me from my enterprise. I felt that to pursue was the best, the only indication, I could offer of my own innocence! All my faculties seemed to have returned to me, brightened and sharpened by the necessities of my position. I was perfectly calm,—I behaved

myself like an unconcerned traveller. I endeavoured to retrieve the time I had lost, by engaging an express. I was informed that one was just about to start, engaged by an agent of the English government, who would permit me to travel in it. They handed me into the carriage. In a corner, wrapped in a large cloak, I perceived the figure of a man, apparently fast asleep, who, I was informed, was my travelling companion. I entered without misgiving—and it was not until we were several stations from Paris that he affected to wake up, and I recognized Vivian Ap Howel!

I do not deny—I admit to the fullest extent—that he renewed all his arguments, all his most passionate entreaties, to induce me to cease from the pursuit of my unworthy husband, and consent to a divorce, which, under the circumstances, he still thought it possible to obtain. My only reply was, that at the first halt we made I summoned the guard, informed him that I felt too ill to proceed, alighted from the carriage; and the train proceeded with Vivian alone, leaving me at Abbeville—necessarily for another lapse of precious time.

I arrived in Paris, however, the same night, though very late.

I took up my quarters purposely—having first ascertained, by inquiry, that no person of the name of Ap Howel was staying there—at one of the largest hotels in that capital, much frequented by the English. I could not hope or fear that my husband and his paramour would be there. Yet I made inquiries, apparently quite calm and indifferent inquiries, as if for some common acquaintance. No such persons had been seen! It was midnight; the vast maze of Paris was around me. I knew now that my misfortune was irretrievable! I returned to my solitary apartment—but it would be in vain to attempt to describe the night I passed in it!

And what would it profit minutely to detail how those subsequent terrible weeks in Paris were consumed? I prosecuted researches untiring, unremitted; with the sole hope and view, I own it, of descending like a Nemesis of reproach and retribution upon the honeymoon of that guilty union.

I thought at first that I could accomplish this result by my own exertions—my own un-

flagging diligence. I hoped that the fugitives would not apprehend my pursuit—they had no reason, so far as I knew, to be aware of it—and that they would remain in Paris without feeling the necessity of unusual precaution. I felt satisfied that I should speedily light upon them, and overwhelm them with the public denunciation their odious crime so well merited!

Doubtless, my demeanour in Paris, under this persuasion, to persons ignorant of my motives, admitted strange interpretations. I visited constantly places of the gayest resort — the public buildings, the parks, the theatres, the churches. I was present at all the public fêtes; everywhere I hoped to encounter my betrayers—everywhere they eluded me. I was alone always on these excursions—alone constantly in my resting-places. This I assert on my salvation! Some loyal natures will judge by their own hearts, and believe me. Yet I deny not that several times, on these woful pleasure-huntings of mine, I discerned, with grief and dismay, the presence of Sir Vivian Ap Howel! I treated him always as an absolute stranger, wherever we encountered. I could do no more. I was entirely ignorant of the hideous plot organised

against me. What right had I to prohibit Paris to him?

No doubt this unceasing repulsion—this unceasing pursuit of objects so contrary to his wishes—worked, with the atrocious counsel of Sophia, to betray that once bright and chivalrous spirit into the gulf of blackest treachery and cruelty it plunged into finally, dragging me down with it into irretrievable misery and ruin!

Day followed day, until days became weeks—weeks, a month; still a constantly deceptive expectation lured me on. I now began to search into the more secluded districts of Paris. I considered at last that there were ample reasons, independent of any dread of my personal pursuit, to induce Sophia and my husband to keep their criminal happiness in the shade. I preserved some method in my frenzy. I visited the most remote and secluded suburbs; everywhere I made my inquiries with the delicacy and zeal of a police agent employed in the detection of some elaborate conspiracy. I kept up an assiduous correspondence at the bureaux of passports, with clerks, whose services I had retained by handsome fees. Their replies con-

vinced me that since my arrival the fugitives had not quitted Paris. No! for, warned by Sir Vivian, in that accursed interview with Sophia, in which the two concocted their destructive plan against me, Scarlatt and his paramour left Paris almost as soon as they entered it.

At last the lapse of time occurred to me, in the shape of a failure in my pecuniary resources. The expenses of my residence and incessant perquisitions were, of course, very heavy; my stock of money daily ran lower. Until then I had not been able to prevail upon myself to confide to any one in England the secret of my wanderings, and of their disgraceful cause. I was now compelled to write home to my steward, at Mauleverer, to desire him to send me a supply of money; and I found it necessary at last to pen to my mother-in-law, at Plas Newydd, a heart-broken narrative of the discoveries I had made, and of the object of my abode in Paris.

Weary, however, now at last of my own useless researches, it occurred to me that I had a right to invoke the protection and assistance of the representative of my country in that foreign capital. I determined to request the

advice, and, if possible, the interference of the English ambassador. I was surprised, however, at the difficulty and delay which I had to encounter before I obtained at last an interview with this high functionary. But no marvel was it: from his lips I was destined to learn the spawning of that overwhelming treason which was so soon to take forms so tenfold hideous! The ambassador listened to my complaints with great politeness, though with an appearance of embarrassment and incredulity for which I could not account. At the conclusion, he informed me drily, that he had no reason whatever to believe that Lord Mauleverer was in Paris at all—still less on such an errand as I imputed!

"Public report, on the contrary, rather reverses the rôles designated," he continued, with a sarcastic smile. "But, if circumstances are as you represent them, Lady Mauleverer, I should advise you to hasten home at once to confute that report!—and Sir Vivian, also, who seems, by his card left at the embassy the other day, to be lodging in the same hotel with yourself!"

"What report, my lord?"

He rang the bell and desired his secretary to be sent for, and to bring with him a fashionable morning paper, of a date he mentioned. The young man appeared, handed it respectfully to me, folded at a particular paragraph; while the ambassador, rising and looking at his watch, feigned business, and retired on my first exclamation.

I read these words: "The Elopement in High Life!—No doubt can now be entertained that the gentlemen of the long robe will find some interesting occupation, in connexion with the recent distressing revelations. Lady Mauleverer and Sir Vivian Ap Howel have been clearly traced, after their flight from the castle, in company, to lodgings in a house of very questionable reputation in the metropolis, whence they took a speedy departure for the continent, where they are now supposed to be resident. Proceedings for a divorce will be commenced at the first opening of term, and are looked forward to with great interest by all the numerous admirers of piquant revelations in the higher spheres of life!"

What I became, after reading this document, cannot be described in the words of any human

language! No doubt I behaved myself like a madwoman. The ambassador refused to see me—feigned to have left his house—and I returned to my hotel in a state of almost actual frenzy!

In my delirious absorption I had neglected everything but the one object of my journey. I had not seen a newspaper, at least to notice it, since I left England; even now I forgot to refer to the date of the paper in which I had seen the shocking statement, whose words I distinctly retain. It was, in reality, seven or eight weeks old! Immediately on their return to England—and they were only absent from it long enough for their flight to Paris, and as rapid return, on hearing of the death of Luxmoor, and forming their complot with Vivian—Sophia had availed herself of her acquaintance with persons employed on the press, to propagate the calumny placed on record above!

My sole desire and intention was now to return to England, to refute this monstrous libel by any means which the laws might place at my disposal; but, excited to a real frenzy as I was, I found I could not move until the arrival of the remittances I expected from Eng-

land. I was indebted in a considerable sum at the hotel where I resided, and for a supply of necessaries I had been obliged to procure from Parisian tradesmen, who had begun of late to watch my demeanour with suspicion. I had not even the means to pay my travelling expenses to London; I was obliged perforce, therefore, to wait the supplies I expected. Meanwhile the answers to my letters had already, I found, been delayed beyond a reasonable time.

With my mind thus harrowed up with grief, indignation, astonishment, it was strange, but I was overtaken with a feverish thirst for intelligence I had hitherto so slighted. I had not, I solemnly declare, the faintest apprehension that this marvellous calumny would be, or could be, followed up by any substantial movement against me. I imagined I had only to appear, to compel the withdrawal of so baseless a scandal, and restore myself in the public opinion as an individual most vilely calumniated in absence and ignorance. But I now anxiously sought for English news, and endeavoured to divert my ravening anxiety by a perusal of every English paper I could procure.

It was thus that on the second day of my e-

forced delay in Paris, while I was yet sickening over my morning's disappointment in the post —that my eye suddenly lighted on the awful heading, under the general one of legal intelligence, in the Court of Queen's Bench:

THE EARL OF MAULEVERER *v.* SIR VIVIAN AP HOWEL!!

The sight deserted my eyes, and it was several minutes after, before I could distinctly read, and realize to myself that I was reading, the flagitious document, which nevertheless was burning, as it were, in living characters of flame, beneath my gaze!—Still burns, letter for letter, in my memory!

The report was headed by a list of lawyers for plaintiff and defendant, that certainly seemed to me like the names of actual living members of the legal profession, whom I had heard mentioned. They were arranged too with an order and coherence which all my efforts to believe myself suddenly struck with madness, could not disarrange!

I saw that the leading counsel opened the case in the usual form of such procedures, and which it seemed to me no species of delirium

could have bestowed upon me the faculty of composing!

"This was an action to recover compensation for one of the greatest injuries that could be inflicted by man on man, brought by his noble but most unhappy client, the Earl of Mauleverer, against an individual whose illustrious distinction as a soldier, only, alas, rendered his lapse from the laws of friendship and morality the more signally disgraceful to himself and to all the unfortunate parties concerned!

"The details of the case, which the learned counsel trusted to be enabled to establish by the most irrefragable evidence, were of an unusually painful and heart-rending description. The facts were few in number, but they comprised a chain of the most irresistible proof! The marriage had been one most certainly of affection, even more particularly, he believed he should be enabled to establish, on the part of the unhappy lady, the subject of this deplorable investigation! He believed he was correct in stating that it had been what is commonly called a Gretna Green match, rendered necessary by the political differences between the two distinguished families whose youthful representatives took upon

themselves to heal thus the antagonism of two powerful families of provincial Montagus and Capulets. It was not for him to argue an original lightness of character in the lady from this circumstance—which was productive for a considerable period of the happiest results. A genera reconciliation followed on the stolen match, and for years no happiness could exceed that of the couple who attracted, possibly in an equal degree, by all the fascinations of personal and mental endowment, should, one would have thought, have continued to offer the very model of a happy union.

"He need not enlarge upon other advantages of position and results to this apparently brilliantly-starred alliance. His noble client's career was before the world; his political distinction was such as to reflect credit on any woman's choice. On her part, Lady Mauleverer had justly achieved a reputation as one of the leaders of ton, familiar to the frequenters of the fashionable circles of society. Two lovely children—one of them a female, to whom this unhappy divarication from the paths of duty on the part of her maternal relative, would be a lifelong drawback and reflection—crowned this seem-

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unfortunate lady was induced to relinquish her husband's society for a lengthened period, taking refuge finally in her father's house, who was at the time in a state of hostility against his son-in-law, that precluded the possibility of the latter taking up his abode at the same place. But while her husband was even peremptorily exiled from her society, Sir Vivian was furnished with easy means of access and visitation, being an acknowledged favourite with the exasperated father, and one whom he had always himself intended for his son-in-law. He (the learned counsel) was far from alleging that motives of *disappointment and revenge* at this time weighed with Sir Vivian Ap Howel, who, nevertheless, might think he had reason for both feelings in the loss of a lady, still regarded as one of the most beautiful of those whom he might justly designate the most beautiful women in the world—the women of this fortunate land, which, in common he did not doubt with the jury, and all his auditory, he (the learned counsel) was proud to call his native land! And unhappily, it was but too certain that the avowed object of the noble relatives of this lady, for a considerable period, was to sever the holy but somewhat in-

formal bands that united her to the unfortunate plaintiff. Yet happy, he might say, would it have been for him if an attempt, which at the time—so narrow and limited is our vision!—he looked upon as the greatest of calamities, had succeeded! As it was, no distinct degree of criminality could be urged against the misguided pair at the period, and not a shadow of suspicion for long after crossed the mind of the bereaved and trusting husband! On the contrary, with the generosity and candour of a nature raised by its own virtues above the very notion of vileness in others, his unhappy client was induced to place the greatest confidence in Sir Vivian Ap Howel's friendship and assistance. But subsequent events, on which he would not now dwell, had thrown the most painful doubts upon all the circumstances of this era—even on the legitimacy of a child born to his unfortunate client at the time—one of the most dreadful consequences of a married woman's lapse from the special virtues of her sex! Fortunately, soon after Sir Vivian was compelled to leave England with his regiment, though he (the learned counsel) should reluctantly be compelled to draw the attention of the jury to certain circumstances accompanying

his leave-taking from Lady Mauleverer — including the gift of a handkerchief—not, he was sorry to say, under analogous circumstances to the loss of that one Othello valued so highly!—which, though perhaps in themselves 'trifles light as air,' became of heavy weight and significance in connexion with subsequent events!

"On Sir Vivian's departure, the long-protracted reconciliation between the families of these Welsh Montagus and Capulets was effected—and innumerable witnesses would testify to the uniform kindness and attention exhibited by the unfortunate plaintiff to his wife during the whole long intervening period to the date of the defendant's return—covered, it must be confessed, with a glory merited by the most distinguished services, but of a kind the most assured to attract the admiration—not to say the blind enthusiasm—of the female sex! From this date, however, his noble but unfortunate client had detected a great change in his wife's manner and feelings towards him, which he endeavoured most assiduously, and during a course of years, in vain, to restore to their pristine warmth and congeniality! The cause unhappily became but too evident in a short time, but to the observation of others only before

whom the guilty parties had not motives so strong to put a control on their demeanour, actions, and conversation. Sir Vivian Ap Howel was a near neighbour of the Mauleverer family, and the friendship so long subsisting between the houses authorized a degree of intimacy and familiarity not so usual possibly under other circumstances. Having been also named trustee in a large property left to Lady Mauleverer, by her father, to her separate use, he was presented with facilities —he would not say with temptations, though the separate property of married women, he was sorry to say, was too frequently the bait of the artful and designing seducer!—in this instance, however, the seducer was one of the wealthiest mining proprietors in the country—He was presented with *facilities*, at all events, he (the learned counsel) would say, to the abuse of a husband's generous confidence, which it was impossible to blame in the latter, but of which the former had fatally availed himself! From motives of a rare delicacy, which yet he trusted the jury would appreciate, Lord Mauleverer had declined any personal interference in the arrangements under this trust. But not satisfied with the opportunity thus unavoidably—he might

even say, most creditably allowed, it would be proved in evidence that the guilty parties met almost constantly at the house of a lady in the vicinity, whose friendly intimacy with the Mauleverer family, and addiction to literary pursuits of an absorbing nature, rendered her house very suitable for the purpose, and herself very unlikely to imagine or detect the dishonourable uses to which it was put!

"These circumstances were the chief elucidations he could offer on the part of his noble client, to the apparently sudden and irremediable lapse from virtue and discretion exhibited by the unhappy lady, the subject of this investigation.

"It would be proved by the clearest evidence, that Lord Mauleverer, being compelled to leave his home to go to London on pressing business, his infatuated wife did not even wait for his departure before she sent forth a messenger with a letter summoning her partner in guilt to her presence! But an accidental—perhaps he should say, a providential circumstance—occasioned the sudden return of Lord Mauleverer, and his discovery of circumstances that could leave no doubt of the criminal nature of the

intimacy existing between the unhappy lady and the defendant.

"Yet unwilling to abandon his wife and the mother of his children altogether to infamy, Lord Mauleverer had quitted his own roof, rather, than by expelling her with her paramour, render it open and manifest to all the world. But the infatuated lady herself resolved on quitting it, alone and apparently unprotected; and it would be clearly proved that she rejoined her paramour immediately afterwards in London. Direct proof would be tendered that they had passed several hours, in each other's society exclusively, in a house in the metropolis, which, with some of the externals of propriety, was but too well known as a haunt of high-class depravity. The despicable but still credible mistress of the establishment, was unhappily enabled to furnish an evidence on this part of the case, which, however open to suspicion on divers scores patent to his lordship and the jury, he (the learned counsel) trusted it would be discerned was precisely of that nature which was to be expected in a case of this kind. 'Vile means to vile deeds, are handles necessary,' they would be pleased to remember, in the

words of one of the greatest poetical elucidators of humanity!—But this was not all! Finding themselves in danger of pursuit from the justly irritated husband, this unhappy pair had taken a hurried departure from the house of Madame Moorlux for the Continent, and whatever precautions they might have taken in avoiding public signs of recognition and intimacy—in Sir Vivian's assumption of a false name—as men of the world, and men acquainted with the frailties and passions of our common organization, the jury could draw but one inference from the fact of these unhappy fugitives having resided, and still residing, in the same hotel at Paris—although, from a panic that seized them on the road thither, travelling together by express, the one under the false assumption that he was a government messenger, and both closely disguised—they had not arrived in that capital together!

"Under these circumstances, he (the learned counsel) anticipated that the justice he was there to demand for his noble client could not be denied him. It was of course known to the jury that this action was a necessary preliminary to a dissolution of the tie which united this un-

happy nobleman to the false partner of his bed, who had disgraced his name and that of her own illustrious ancestry, had forgotten so utterly all that was due to herself and to that bright assemblage of the high-born matronage of the land of which she was now a fallen member, and had once been a bright and conspicuous ornament! Of course the motive paramount with his unfortunate client was to obtain a release from 'the loathed Mezentian thraldom' of such an union; and therefore he was instructed to pray for no vindictive damages, but for such as would satisfy that higher tribunal before which a subsequent stage of the proceedings would conduct them, of the IMPOSSIBILITY OF COLLUSION OR UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE PARTIES—impossible indeed as such was even to imagine! Damages, however, let him add on his own responsibility, they ought to give, of an amount to establish the estimate an impartial jury of Englishmen made of the grievous nature of the injury his unfortunate and noble client had sustained in the loss of the companionship of a most beautiful, accomplished, and he might add, without fear of being misunderstood, wealthily-endowed lady!

—of the mother of his children, whom he could never again contemplate without anguish!—and of the heartrending character of the disgrace and dishonor which unhappily the opinion of the world continued to affix to the principal sufferer in these unspeakable calamities! He should now call witnesses, one of the first of whom would be the excellent mother and accomplished sister of the noble plaintiff, who would establish on what terms of happiness and endearment he had lived with his wife up to the ill-starred return of Sir Vivian Ap Howel to the country!"

At this point of the address, the report went on calmly to state, the counsel for the defendant rose, and intimated that it would not be necessary to call witnesses. He was happy to say that the jury would be relieved from the necessity of trying the case. He and his learned friends who appeared for the defendant FELT THEY COULD NOT RESIST THE PLAINTIFF'S CLAIM TO DAMAGES, AND HAD AGREED TO AN AMOUNT!!

Some indifferent observations on the part of the judge followed, adverting to the unhappy nature of the case, which had precipitated a lady, whose beauty and accomplishments were the

themes of universal admiration in society, and a young soldier, who had promised to become a glory and safeguard to his country, into an abyss of shame and ignominy from which no future repentance, or heroic achievement could rescue them! and the report concluded briefly with the words—"Verdict for the plaintiff—Damages £10,000."

No—I could not believe my own senses! What! without having been in any manner summoned to the bar of the tribunal—without having any knowledge even of its proceedings—was I declared infamous? pronounced to have forfeited my place in society,—to have become the opprobrium of my children,—the disgrace of my ancient name? Was I to be cast off to shame, and degradation, and poverty? Were the atrocious objects of my enemies to be attained without my being permitted to speak a word in my own behalf?

But if so—if this could be possible—if a woman had no right to raise her voice in defence where her all was at stake—what was the meaning of this—that the man—the MAN who was conjointly accused of a detestable violation of every principle of morality and honour with me

—who was, however, permitted every means of repelling the horrible calumnies—that this man had suffered judgment to be pronounced against us?

I say, I read these paragraphs a hundred times, and still seemed to remain outside the meaning of the words! I refused to believe in my senses! I had a conviction that what I perused was a mere hallucination of the brain, which could not abide the steady analysis of the deceived faculties for many minutes! I read, and read, and re-read; but the words remained steadily there! I felt a strange whirl increasing in my head,—everything in the room seemed to float and swim around me! I tried to convince myself that I was insane! I rang the bell for a waiter. He was an English one. I asked him to read the paragraphs I pointed out to him.

He did so, and though his voice trembled—perhaps with some compassionate feeling—perhaps merely with excitement of the unusual office—he read me word for word what I had read!

A supernatural calm descended upon me. I thanked him, and asked him if he thought it possible to find Sir Vivian Ap Howel in Paris.

The man smiled, as it seemed, involuntarily, and said that Sir Vivian occupied his apartment *as usual*, at the end of the corridor where mine was situated. He seldom went out till a few minutes after my ladyship! Should he summon him?

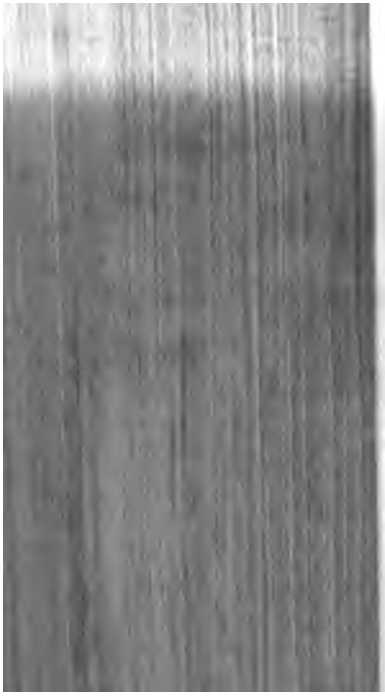
Nothing surprised me then. I answered in the affirmative.

The waiter returned in a few moments, with word that Sir Vivian would do himself the honour of waiting upon me in a short time, and meanwhile begged to forward me some letters which had been taken by mistake to his apartment, intended for me!

I took them mechanically. One was in my steward's handwriting. I opened it. He was a worthy man, who had been in my father's employment for many years, and whom I had retained in mine, in spite of Scarlatt's wish to get rid of all the old servants at the castle. It announced to me, with sorrowful brevity, that he had been dismissed by Lord Mauleverer, *immediately on his return to the castle after his vain pursuit of myself and Sir Vivian to the continent!* That his lordship had taken the entire management of the property on himself,

and permitted no one else to receive any money; and as he was now in legal possession of my whole inheritance, and I had so unhappily compromised myself with another gentleman!—whatever excuses there might be for me in the unkind behaviour of the earl!—he, my steward, had no available funds to offer me, excepting the scanty savings he had been enabled to make from the wants of a large family of his own, and which he humbly ventured to assure me should be at my disposal as soon as I signified a wish to that effect!

I next read, with a strange, obdurate calm, the letter from Plas Newydd—from Mrs. Suett, my mother-in-law. It was conceived in terms of abuse and violence I will not attempt to recall, and contained a direct accusation—on which seemingly there rested no shadow of doubt—of my having eloped with Sir Vivian Ap Howel to the continent, and of having thereby proved myself not only the worst of wives to her poor son, but the cruellest sister-in-law possible to her dear Bronwen, whom I had deprived of a husband on whom she had set her "young affections ever since she was born!" As to my wicked scandals against her "poor injured son,



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CHAPTER XIII.

PASSION AND PRINCIPLE.

WHAT followed is still in great measure a chaos of confused and horrible dreams in my recollection. But I must not dwell on the ghastly reminiscences that return upon me lest my reason should again yield before the infinite horrors of the phantasmagoria!—For several months I was a madwoman—Horrible, horrible! —I had a fixed idea that all who approached me were plotting my murder in some inconceivably fiendish or abominable form! My distracted imagination created a hell around me in an infinitude of appalling visions of the means to be employed in effecting this purpose!— Sometimes they hung me for days by a rending

skirt over the edge of fathomless precipices: now one sharpened a knife in a secret corner for my throat: poisons, I thought, were mixed in all my food and drink! To complete the awful nature of the calamity that had befallen me, even my insanity took part with my enemies, abetted them in their atrocious plans! Vivian Ap Howel, my betrayer, was the only person who approached me in whom I placed trust—whom I believed incapable of injuring me! I would eat or drink only from his hands—I could only sleep when he watched beside my couch!

Let me do him what justice I can, in any measure to redeem the blackness of his great crime and treachery! No father, no brother—I had almost said, no mother, no sister—could have attended on all the wild and varying moods of my terrible malady with a deeper purity of tenderness and devotion than this fiery-hearted young man on the woman for whose sake he had parted with what he had held dearer than existence—his honor and his faith!

The people of the hotel imagined they understood the nature of our relation, and with the laxity of continental manners, readily admitted

the claims of Vivian to my exclusive care and management.

Nothing that wealth could procure—that the most anxious, unwearied, all-devoted love could administer—was spared to effect my restoration. The most eminent faculty of Paris—even my own family physician from London—were summoned to my couch of agony and delirium. The unhappy youth himself, they tell me, never once left the hotel—scarcely even my presence—until the first terrible violence of the symptoms had subsided. They were those of brain fever—which abated only to give place to the dreadful species of lunacy I have described. The paroxysms incidental to this terrible form of excitement were usually succeeded by long hours—even days—of insensibility, or of lethargic prostration—during which, on several occasions, frequently, in the opinion of those around me—of all but Vivian—I had passed the eternal bourne. But he would not suffer me to die! His cruel love and indefatigable cares recalled my wavering spirit perpetually to its confinement: perpetually fostered back and renewed the departing flame of life in its spent and darkened receptacle.

How often did I awake from trances of death-like stupefaction to find those deep, yearning, all-absorbed, eyes fixed on mine, in an unutterable and unuttered agony of love, and woe, and fear, and devouring expectation!—Which then I encountered, even when scarcely conscious, with a sense, so hideously mistaken, of a powerful protection, and shelter, and comfort from the vague but perpetual conviction of horror and danger surrounding me! How often did I feel as if a dew of gracious balm were falling on my burning brows—which were in truth but the tears of remorse and vain compassion shed by my betrayer over his work!

But I must not dwell on these recollections. Above all, I must strive not again to realize that fearful vision of a prodigious serpent with the head and eyes of a woman—the head and eyes of Sophia Luxmoor!—coiling and folding round me in easy, wave-like undulations—which I felt were destined finally to enwreath and crush me, till not a rib or joint should remain whole! If I should again distinctly revive that dreadful phantasy, I should be mad again!

Let me hasten over what remains to be told of this dark tale.

During that long and, at times, hopeless period of hallucination, the crime of my husband and of his paramour was completed. He had become the mere slave and servant of her will. The additional preliminary of an ecclesiastical divorce was readily passed through, where no opposition was made. A bill to complete my legal repudiation, and enable my husband to marry again, was introduced and passed, with a little more ceremonial pretension to the forms of justice, in the House of Lords. There they affected to hear evidence and examine proofs; evidence which the principal accused was allowed no opportunity of rebutting; proofs which were necessarily accepted as such where no opportunity of exposing their fallacy was permitted to the only person who had the wish and interest to refute them.

I was declared guilty! Unheard, untried, unsummoned in any form before the infernal injustice of these tribunals called of justice, I was declared guilty of the worst of social crimes —consigned over to public disgrace and ignominy—my children's names branded—their true descent impugned! The bill for my divorce became a law. The Right Honourable

Scarlatt, Earl of Mauleverer, was pronounced free to marry again. A beggarly pittance, of some twentieth part of my own inheritance—of the property that had descended to me from my ancestors—was assigned me. All the rest passed into the possession and absolute disposal of him who had thus shaken me off to ruin and despair. I was convicted in the eyes of mankind of the crime he alone had committed, and he remained at liberty to exalt in my place the vile woman, for whose sake this whole horrible conspiracy had been devised!

This deed was consummated during my period of mental alienation. But if I had been in the fullest possession of my faculties, I could have done nothing to prevent it. I had no voice, no claim to be heard, before the tribunal that condemned me. My husband and the treacherous lover who threw away the priceless jewel of his soul to make me his prey—only had the right to present themselves before that phantom of legality, whose real office was but to fling to each his bleeding portion of the spoil.

Gradually, and with frequent returns of darkness—a gloom, as if the shadow of the

departed tempest on a wreck-strewed, tossing sea, after a night of storms rather than light, of reason revisited my clouded faculties. I lay for hours in long reveries of profound and often wholly illusive reflection: everything around me was unknown and unfamiliar. In reality, I had been removed to a little villa in the Bois de Boulogne, which Vivian had hired, in the hope that the change from the thronged and noisy hotel might have a beneficial effect on my nerves. His features, his tones, were the only key-notes that for a long time remained to me amidst the confused and wandering tenor of my thoughts!

I will not afflict and weary my reader by describing all the slow process of my recovery, if recovery it could be called, which restored me from realms of fearful hallucinations to still more fearful actualities. I remembered at last what I was—what I had been: where I was, and what I might have become, in the world's opinion, did not occur to me, did not trouble me, in any form, for many days. They were days of profound rest and calm for me—of still more intense anxiety and terror to Vivian: he feared I was sinking into a state of idiocy. Unfortunate and guilty youth! the first sign

for him of my reviving intelligence was an inconceivable impatience—an abhorrence and dread of his presence! This feeling grew with my comprehension of my situation. Every effort was made to turn the current of my ideas on this subject, by himself and all around me; but in vain. At last a tremendous recollection broke upon me, like a flash of light! I made inquiries, which it was found could not be eluded without renewing my excitement. I comprehended then, at last, that I was under the roof, and in the absolute power of the man who had so barbarously betrayed me! Finally, that thus, in all human conviction, my guilt was proven; my good name—the honour of the mother of my children—irretrievably stained, lost!—myself caught and entangled hopelessly in the toils that had closed around me.

What superhuman power prompted — sustained me in my resolve that it should NOT BE SO?—that I would never give to my remorseless enemies the consolation of believing me guilty, at least in the end?—never reward the perfidy of the man, who had abetted in the atrocious machination, with the attainment of his aims?

In spite of all that I have suffered in consequence—of the tragical issue that awaited my resolve—it is still a consolation to me to remember that—betrayed, abandoned by all the world else, as I was—I once more, with an unshaken resolution, which he himself felt to be irrevocable, refused Vivian Ap Howel's kneeling supplications to be allowed to repair, in the only manner he declared to be any longer possible, the injuries he had inflicted on me!

He no longer disguised from me their full extent. It was his object, indeed, to convince me of their irretrievable nature: I compelled the explanation. As soon as my understanding of my position was fully restored, I demanded to see him, after having refused for several weeks, with an inconceivable horror, to permit his approach.

He came! What a trembling, guilty, self-condemned wretch, that hero of glorious fields, that highborn, chivalrous gentleman! — now fallen so low, even in his own esteem, that he dared not raise his eyes to the pallid and wo-begone victim who awaited there to question him! But he felt, as well as I did, that the climax in our disastrously-mingled fate had

arrived—that all must now be decisively won or lost!

He replied, without varnish or circumlocution, to my inquiries. Yes; the house in which I found myself was his—at least it was in his occupation. Yes; all the world believed I had accepted his protection, and was living there under it. Yes; the proceedings against me, against himself, on the part of the Earl of Mauleverer, had been carried out to the fullest extent. I was divorced, by a decree of the Ecclesiastical Court, and by act of parliament, from a man who had always been unworthy of me—who preferred another woman—and who, he knew, was on the point of marrying her, with the most indecent haste, unless it was designed as an added insult to me—or, as he believed! was rendered necessary to *legitimate issue*, for whose sake mine would probably be set aside, and shorn of their inheritance! That very day, in fact, Vivian stated, he knew, for a certain fact, he who had been my husband, and Sophia Luxmoor, were to be married in the face of day, and with the approbation of the world!

I was wonderfully calm and composed. I inquired of him how I had ever injured him

to so fearful an extent, that he had joined my enemies and his own in their horrible plot for my destruction?

He entered into an explanation that wanted no sophistry and eloquence that passion, and even a fallacious semblance of reasoning, could lend.

He told me that, on his return from India, he had come to the certain knowledge that I had been deceived into my marriage with Scarlatt Suett; that my union with him had been productive of the greatest misery; that in temper, character, feelings, we were the reverse of each other. He confessed that his own early love for me, never for an instant subdued, revived, with all the flame and violence of the matured passions of manhood, when he beheld me again on his return. It was fed by a jealousy that gnawed into his vitals—by compassion for my unhappy situation—by the exasperation of witnessing a treasure so despised by its possessor, for which he would have resigned every other hope! A chain of fatalities, whose links he himself could scarcely discern, had contributed to the result. A singular combination of circumstances had

accumulated a mass of apparent proofs against me and himself, in conjunction, which, even if he had been most anxious and determined to resist the consequences, would have been overwhelming! But so convinced was he of the impossibility of a woman's obtaining justice, in the shape of a divorce, against a false husband—so satisfied that, even were that feasible, my scruples were not to be overcome—that he had found it impossible to resist the temptation of assisting to set me free, by offering no obstacles to the plans of Lord Mauleverer and his paramour!

Vivian was deceived by my strange serenity. I said, after a slight pause, that I hoped, at least, he could convince me he had himself been rather an agent than the contriver of so villanous a plot?

I trust he had the right—at all events, he assumed it—of throwing the horror of its original invention upon Sophia!

He had arrived in Paris, he averred, after I had left him in the express, maddened with the sight of my misery, of my clinging pursuit of my detested husband, of my disdain of himself! He had found out Sophia at once, under Lord

Mauleverer's protection—communicated to her the news of Luxmoor's death, and of my approach. She also was desperate—compromised irretrievably; the prizes for which she had been all her life striving, were placed in her grasp, at the price only of an enormous crime! What was a crime to Sophia? Her genius of invention and combination accursedly seconded the impulse of the fiend! She persuaded Vivian, even by her own example! that relief for the wrongs of a woman was not to be hoped for—and finally, she suggested the plan that had been crowned with success—and which he had only regretted, he said, when he witnessed its consequences upon me!

I was satisfied on this point. I had scarcely doubted when I inquired. But I was satisfied. I desired only to know yet another thing;—was Lord Mauleverer a direct conspirator with these twain? Vivian had not yet learned to lie fearlessly. He assured me he was entirely ignorant whether such was the case or not; that he had carefully avoided meeting with him, lest he should be unable finally to prevent himself from wreaking vengeance upon him for all his insolence and calumnies! But there could

be no doubt Lord Mauleverer was now convinced I was wholly his, and he had all along the impression that from an early period after our union, my heart had been turned towards him!

I laughed a little. I could perceive, I said, Sophia's motives: a man, a coronet! But Sir Vivian Ap Howel's, what were they? He, at least, knew that there was no foundation for such a supposition!—he, at least, might give me credit for the possession of some of the right and honourable sentiments of my sex!

Vivian turned pale and faltered in his reply. His motives, he said, were solely to redeem me from the unhappiness I plainly suffered in my uncongenial alliance, and to offer to me the entire dedication of his own existence, to recompense me for all that I had suffered.

"Let me sum up all then," I said, I remember, quite quietly and sedately; "you have been made the poor tool of this foul conspiracy, Sir Vivian Ap Howel! By your means the man you hate has been placed in the full possession of all he has ever coveted: your own name, whose lustre always excited his envy, you have made dishonourable—covered it with a lasting ignominy. You have enabled Sophia to accom-

plish her revenge, maturing for so many years, upon me! She has debased me to her own level —made me infamous—thinks possibly to have made me deserving also of my shame! You have betrayed me yet more villanously a thousand times than your ancestor formerly betrayed mine—for *I* had not injured you! And all for what? For this!—that never, to my dying hour, shall you be ought to me but the vilest of traitors and betrayers! A woman covered with disgrace would indeed be worthy of you, but until I feel myself as much debased in my soul as I am in men's opinion, nothing else to you will I ever be but the most wronged and resentful of women! I utterly refuse, despise, abhor, your proposal to make me a sharer in my own destruction, and unless I am a prisoner in your house, I will pass from under your roof at once and for ever! If I am, I will yet find the means to quit the infamy of its shelter, if it cost me my life, by the most cruel form of death!"

Vivian gazed at me with a look of petrifaction—was silent for several minutes. "You are not a prisoner, Hugh-Helena," he said, at last. "When your reason is perfectly restored, you are as free to leave this house as you are to

remain in it. But hear what will be the certain result: when you quit it, you pronounce upon me my sentence of death! I will hasten to the east, and the first conflict in which I am one—if I am mortal—I will lay down the load of an existence which you will have rendered insupportable!"

"Let that be as it will. The moment I know myself to be at liberty to follow my fixed resolutions, I return to England, to exhaust all the means in my power to procure the restoration of my good name! If not, at least to enter my solemn protest before God and the world, against the abominable treachery of which I am the victim!"

"The world will rather believe that, deserted by your paramour, you have invented a ridiculous fable, to retrieve its worthless smiles," Vivian replied. "But even thus, it is irremediable dishonour to me; if it listens to you, no disgrace, no infamy can surpass mine! And do you think, Hugh-Helena, that I could survive such infinite dishonor and infamy?"

"And do you expect me?"

He gave a profound sigh, and was silent again for a long pause. On a sudden he exclaimed,

as if waking from a dream, "I *will* know the truth, then, at last!—Whether Sophia has deceived me in the assurance that *she loved* me! —We do not willingly give those whom we love, to death!"

He turned to me. "When you quit me," he said, "I go to my doom! but no restraint shall henceforth be placed on any of your movements. Here are ample means to transport you whithersoever you may please to direct your steps. Leave me to perish, if you will! If such be your will, you have never loved me, and what I have done is worthy of death; nor do I care to live, assured at last that you can never love me—never repay the devotion of my life with the return which might still have made me supremely blest! could alone have recompensed me for all I have lost for your sake."

As he spoke, he placed a thick rouleau of notes on the table. I took them. The words he had uttered filled up the measure. I comprehended what engine had wrenched his soul from its place! "You shall soon see that I am in earnest," I said; "soon learn if I have loved you—if I could have loved you—to the sacrifice of my own honor, and of my children's name!

All else failing me, I have yet a sacred duty to perform to them—to rescue them from the pollution of the hands into which they have fallen—the hands of the betrayers of their mother!"

"It will be in vain; Sophia loves your children, and will keep them in spite of you. You cannot reclaim them—you are only their *lawful* mother! Had you been unlawfully so, their own father could not have taken them from you—you have heard what I have said;—leave me, and you leave me to perish!"

* * * *

I left him, and I left him to perish!

Not many hours after this conversation, a postchaise drew up at the gate of this villa in the Bois de Boulogne; I got into it—alone.

He, Vivian Ap Howel, handed me into it.

"I am convinced at last!" he said, in low, tranquil, resigned accents, as he did so, "you do not love me, and Sophia lied like the juggling fiend, when she said you did love me! Believe, Hugh-Helena, it was that delusion that has made me the basest of men! But you shall be soon avenged! You prefer your wretched husband, who has cast you for ever from him, like

a loathsome thing, to me who——No matter: we have fulfilled our destiny!—After what we both heard and saw that night when we first met at the Rhaiadr Dhu, we ought to have shunned one another worse than pestilence and death!—Nay, feign not that look of inquiry!—*You too saw the apparition of my wretched ancestress on the torrent—you too heard her shriek over our ill-omened conjunction!*—But God knows! I dreamed not then I could surpass, as you have said, the perfidy of my ancestor, since *I* have had no provocation!—And yet, no provocation?—Is all the misery of my life to count for nothing?"

I could not quit him thus: nor wholly without consolation.

"Vivian," I said; "you are mistaken: Scarlatt Suett is no longer anything more to me than the impersonation of that essence of all injustice against which I go to appeal in the name of my unhappy sex! *I do love you!*—but I will never see you more!"

I turned away from him as I spoke, and said to the postboy, "Paris!"

Vivian gazed at me: an eternity of love and regret and despair was in his eyes! "I compre-

hend!" he said at last, very softly. "The baseness of which I have shown myself capable, has for ever alienated your noble heart!—It is so: my crime is my punishment! It will be so with poor Sophia, too!—Yes, *poor Sophia!*—hate and despise her as you may—triumphant as she may deem herself!—*poor Sophia!*" he repeated in tones of the tenderest, saddest pity! "Go then," he added, with firmness, "you will not let me live for you, Hugh-Helena!—but you cannot prevent me from dying for you!"

His last look of yearning, passionate grief and love, entered my soul; but, thanks be to God! I yet remembered Who hath said, "*Whosoever putteth away a wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband, committeth adultery!*"

CHAPTER XIV.

LOVE IN DEATH.

No one at all familiar with the public records of the last few years, is ignorant of the efforts I made to reverse the judgment pronounced against me—to retrieve the good opinion of a vile world which pronounced on me by its own experience!

My tale was listened to as a curious and ingenious legend, furnishing an amusing paragraph occasionally to a newspaper—or as the ravings of a lunatic.

The law courts, the legislature, had already pronounced: there were no means, had the will existed, to reconsider their decision: vested rights had arisen to bar it: my husband was the husband of another!

My outcries attracted some attentoin, some curiosity, certainly: the affair was designated "a romance in real life!" But on the whole, it was concluded that I was a guilty woman, deserted by my paramour, who thus laboured at the annoyance and misery of a betrayed husband!

I perceived, after a long, fruitless struggle, that this task was in vain. The world grew weary of my reclamations. I had no money, no friends, to buy advocacy or hearing! My health failed: I desired then only to retrieve the society of my children: I thought it would be a consolation at least to die with them around my couch!

But I found that, according to the law of England, a woman has no right in her children but such as the father chooses to afford her! Had Lord Mauleverer even been *acknowledged* as the most depraved of men, I, as the most injured of women, it would have been all the same! But my enemies had reversed the positions: the world applauded Lord Mauleverer when he refused me, in a public court of justice, even the privilege of seeing my children for a few hours alone!—I would not, I could not endure to see them in the presence of

the woman who—but what avails it to repeat the powerless tale?

* * * *

I consented—I do not well know why—to embark for this remote isle. I did not value life in the least—yet I was to go to Madeira to preserve it! My object was, I now think, at least to die in some land, whose air was not thickened by the breath of my betrayers!

It was a foolish, an unmeaning, but irresistible impulse that sent me, before I could bring myself to embark, once more into my native Glamorgan.

I believe I had some quaint fancy that I should like to see my children once again!—My children!—and that I could achieve this object by stealth.

How was it I made my way back that darksome, windy day to Mauleverer?—I have forgotten. Once I had left it as a peasant girl: I returned now as a peasant woman. A hood and mantle concealed my features and figure: I was familiar with the paths of the domain: I knew where to conceal myself that I might have the best chance of seeing my children on the daily exercise I supposed they took.

It was the third weary day of my watchfulness. An open carriage and four horses drove from the castle gates. My daughter Evelyn sat in it, fondling with the hand of a woman, who leaned in an attitude of languor, but yet of profound repose and comfort, on the shoulder of him who had been my husband. No doubt her situation claimed every solicitude: no doubt it accounted for the rapt tenderness and anxiety of the gaze fastened on her!

They passed like a dream. Four horses!—all the pomp and flourish of rank and wealth for which both had ever strained, intrigued—bartered their immortal souls! They were happy now.

I made no utterance. They went past me with the rapidity of a cloud on the wind—yet methinks Sophia was startled as her glance fell on my form! I heard her give a faint exclamation: her husband checked her with soothing words: it was a nervous imagination incident to her condition!

My little Herbert followed at an interval on his pony. The manly child took a pleasure in isolating himself, as if he liked best to feel himself under his own guidance and discretion.

He was walking his pony and switching the bushes, near which I stood, as he went, with boyish wilfulness. I put myself in his path—I called him by his name—my son, my darling Herbert! He looked at me—shrieked out "Mama, help!—here is *wicked Mama!*" and set his pony into a trot that speedily left me far behind—a statue of grief and despair! I saw him gallop up to the carriage as if some fiend form was chasing him—and I too fled.

I know not what dread impulse drove me forth of my ancestral bounds, and urged me on the road that led towards the ascents of the mountains which so many years previously I had climbed in my flight from my father's house to the accursed walls of Plas Newydd. I remember only that I longed, as one ravingly athirst for a stream in which to slake his thirst, to behold, for the last time, the torrent of the Rhaiadr Dhu! If the horrible notion of suicide had entered my head, God pardon it! I was maddened.

I reached the high, moss-grown gate, where years before I had rested on my flight and desponded—Mercy of Heaven, with what cause! And I sat down there again on the old stump of the tree, and I listened to the roar of the

woods in the high wind with a species of dreadful delight. The whole landscape howled around me!

For some time in my progress I had been vaguely conscious of a whining, sniffing sound, that had seemed to follow in my traces. It gained upon me in my pause, yet I took no notice. On a sudden I looked down, and I saw crouching at my feet, with joyful signs of recognition—Trusty Gelert! The noble animal had been long nearly blind, and was now almost spent with age; but while I remained at Mauleverer he had always been carefully looked after, and left at his freedom. I patted the poor beast's large head, and I perceived at a glance that he was reduced nearly to a skeleton—starved by the barbarous negligence of the new race of menials who had at last dispossessed all the Welsh servants at Mauleverer.

I had become like stone. But the spectacle of the faithful animal's maltreatment restored me to my human nature. I wept over the starved hound, I remember—Oh, such tears! Every drop was a clot of my heart's blood: fell as heavily and hopelessly on the gaunt sides and head of the moaning and whining companion

of my disastrous journey to the Ap Howel hills.

Poor Gelert, ah, poor Gelert!—weak and exhausted as he was, he continued to drag his ribby skeleton after me until I reached the spot I desired to reach. It was the edge of the precipice immediately below Castell Ap Howel, that overhung the Rhaiadr Dhu!

I sat and mused. The roar of the torrent soothed me infinitely. I knew that the races of mankind passed as its waters; but that the justice of God remained as its unshaken rocks!

Yet I thought it would be good for me to die. Only I desired, before I plunged down the whelming waters, to see the sun as low as it had seemed on that first night when I stood on that very spot with the boy, Vivian Ap Howel.

I wished him well. I had no resentment against him then. He was serving as a volunteer—as an amateur—what you will—in the armies of the Turk on the Danube. I said so, I think, aloud—that I forgave him, as I hoped God would forgive me what I was about to do.

The sun was fast descending to the level of the mountain tops. Methought he resembled a warrior sinking on a field crimson with slaugh-

ter, but resplendent with the glory of victory! When the bright shield had totally disappeared, I resolved that all should speedily be night with me, too!

Of a sudden, Gelert, who lay panting at my feet, raised himself on his own, set himself on them, stiffly and firmly as on a wooden bench, and glaring wildly upward, uttered the most fearful yell that ever startled the echoes of that dismal valley! But mere echoes they were not that answered around in such doleful foreboding sounds that they recalled to me a legend of whose truth Vivian had often playfully—and yet himself credulously—assured me! Whenever an Ap Howel perished by violence, the dogs with which his ancestors and mine had hunted on their fatal sport together, howled in that valley still! They were well called Cwn Annun—the dogs of hell!

It was the day of Oltenitza: of that great battle in which the Turks, with their European volunteers, stopped the advancing tide of Russian invasion on the Danube.

I knew nothing, of course, of that. But I knew at once that Vivian Ap Howel was slain! —fallen, as he had told me he would fall—in

the first onset of battle where Death and he could meet in the light of fame!

I thought truly it was time for me, too, to die! I arose; I gazed down the ceaseless avalanche of waters—I was about to fling myself headlong into forgetfulness in their flowing arms!

I know I shall not be believed—but even as my foot stepped into the yielding air something clutched me back from behind. A shadow, which would have his form had it been of substance, glided past me. A cold cheek touched mine—I heard a voice which said—albeit soundlessly!—"Ah, slay not my soul also with your despair!—Yet a little while, Hugh-Helena! and we shall meet again in heaven! In heaven they unite those only who have loved sincerely upon earth!"

I stretched my arms . . . . . when the morning came, I found myself lying on the rocks with my red country mantle firmly clenched in the teeth of Trusty Gelert—but Trusty Gelert himself lay stiff and dead by my side.

It is weeks since I have written what is above, and I still survive!—have survived to be

cheated of my last consolation—which was, to die detesting this woman—invoking the justice of heaven on her head! It is not even permitted me to die before her—to die and leave the sting of an eternal remorse in their hearts! —Many hours have not elapsed since I received the letter I place on record below. She is no more, since it was only to be transmitted to me if a fatal result—I know not what I write— And still I linger; still they can give me no assurance of my doom! Well indeed may I conclude my mournful tale with the banshee's cry: *O beth ywaf fi!*

CHAPTER XV.

THE LAST LETTER OF SOPHIA.

BE not amazed! It is my handwriting!—the handwriting of her who has so wronged you that she would not even wish to be forgiven, in this supreme hour of anguish and death! Forgiveness would in you be superhuman virtue, Hugh-Helena! but it would overwhelm me with fire from heaven!

Yet, were it possible Sophia Sutcliffe could hope for pardon from Hugh-Helena Pomeroy, it would be now, when a vengeance, perhaps heavier than any that in your wildest moments of indignation you have called down upon her head, has descended on it!

For are you not avenged, unhappy lady!

grievously as you have been wronged? The emotion caused by your unexpected and terrible apparition at Mauleverer—the dread, for many hours after, that you had committed suicide in some frightful form—cost me the last hope to which I clung in the midst of all the horrors of remorse and disappointment that have assailed me in my guilty triumph!—the hope that I might yet be saluted with the redeeming name of mother! My constitution, exhausted by so many struggles and sufferings, thenceforth no longer lent me power to withstand the progress of the fell disease which the ruffian hand of Carolus Luxmoor inflicted, and which had long fastened its consuming fangs in secret on my bosom! A fearful operation, which I know it is impossible I can survive—and which, if I did, would disfigure me past even the love of the unhappy man whom the same barbarous laws, that bound me to my murderer, permit me to call my husband—is yet the only poor chance medical skill can offer to preserve my existence! Oh, are you not avenged, Hugh-Helena! since it is Scarlatt Suett himself who has been obliged to announce to me this sentence—to implore of me to run this hazard of

immediate death, as the only possible means of prolonging for any period my existence? Immediate death to me . . . under circumstances of cruel pain! . . . to me whom his distant skeleton shadow always filled with horror—to whom pain, even in its minor degrees, has always been insupportable?

I have consented, because *he* has asked the sacrifice of me! and I know that I have parted thus with the few weeks of existence that might yet have remained to me. The surgeons have arrived; I can almost see the glitter of their fearful, keen-edged knives! I know that this dying glory of day is the last sunset that ever my despairing eyes shall track in its descent from the golden fields of heaven! But I dare not raise my glance above its darkening effulgence, for mercy to the throne of Him whose holiest laws I have violated! The best that I can hope is, that I may have forfeited eternally that divine essence of consciousness and existence whose possession I have so abused!

It is thus with me, who have but just attained the supremacy in all that through life have seemed—not without much cause—to be

the objects of my unwearied pursuit. I am the wife of Scarlatt Suett—Countess of Mauleverer—mistress of a castle, and of a great estate; surrounded by throngs of emulous dependents—menials, eager to win favour by the devotion of their services! Literary fame, tardily and languidly bestowed upon the unknown plebeian aspirant, crowns the titled claimant with her brightest wreaths, lavished with both hands! All this I have attained—all this must leave: wealth, rank, honors, the idolatrous love (pardon me the words, Hugh-Helena!) of the man for whose sake I have soiled the whiteness of my soul for ever! Nothing can preserve me from the dreadful doom that awaits me!—And are you not avenged, I ask, once more?—At least, when you receive this letter, I shall be beyond the reach of farther earthly retribution!

But for this certain consummation, yawning for its prey, I should not, I own, have the courage to declare, as I now purpose, your innocence, to Scarlatt Suett and to the world! My testimony alone can establish it. Your own frenzied appeals have been in vain; the solemn declaration, contained in the will of

Vivian Ap Howel, found in his breast—pierced with the same bullet as his noble heart, and bathed in its ruddiest flow—has arrested opinion but for a moment—not turned the tide! The clause, which made you the inheritrix of all his large possessions, has balanced the impression in your favour, by all its weight of gold, in the scale! In vain have you repudiated the crushing gift—transferred it to the young girl who had been looked upon, by her mother and herself, at all events, as the fitting bride of him who thus endeavoured to repair some of the consequences of his fault against you. You stood, and stand yet, condemned in the world's wrong judgment, and I alone can clear you of the stains that darken your fame! I will—and I do! All that you have alleged in your demands for justice, I bear witness to all mankind, is true! You are the victim of a conspiracy between your own desperate lover and the desperate wife of Luxmoor, whose chains only fell from her at the instant when she was irretrievably compromised with your misled and unhappy husband!

Some excuses, perchance, I might allege for my own vile part in this vile deed. The indis-

soluble bond that bound me to the worst and most detestable of men; the impossibility which you yourself, alas! so inexorably decreed should cut me from every other means of extrication I so vainly essayed; the years of indescribable suffering, calumny, exile—ill-requited, hopeless, inglorious toil, I had undergone; the bitter, innumerable, crushing disappointments, in so many forms, I had sustained; the repulse, the relentless unkindness you evinced for me; the cruel humiliations to which you subjected me; the spirit of retaliation and revenge you awakened in me, by the persecution and slander with which your jealousy, and irritated pride, and self-love pursued me—all crowned by that barbarous betrayal into the hands of the rapacious felon, who called himself my husband! There might be matter of apology in all this, well sifted; but I have no courage, no time for the task. Men must judge of me what they will; it matters little to me now, in very deed, what verdict they may pronounce. Nothing of all this will I plead; but one apology—which, perhaps, will only exaggerate my offences in your eyes—I will and must declare, because it is the key to all that may still be

inexplicable to you in your own destinies, while it unlocks the secrets of my entire existence! Scarlatt Suett and I loved each other—and have loved each other only—from the hour when we first met!

Ah, did I not love Scarlatt Suett when, to make him rich and great, as it were, by a fairy stroke of fortune—had I no respect for my duty, no love of virtue, when, to preserve myself and him from the gulf of temptation, on whose verge we were slipping, hand in hand—I resolved on wedding him to you? Vile, indeed, would have been the plot—base the heart that could have conceived it—had I not in reality believed Scarlatt Suett to be all that I represented him to you! And if you had ever loved him as I have loved him, you could not have wakened from the delusion—if delusion it was—so soon and so thoroughly. But for me, I die with the conviction that, had he not bartered his better and nobler self for the glittering toys I offered him, Scarlatt Suett would have realised all that my own dazzled vision depicted him to you!

And if the love of Scarlatt Suett for me has chiefly, to the world's eye, been exhibited in the

forms of aversion, of vengeful, crushing, contumely and rejection, I, who knew the secret source of all that bitterness, knew that love only—love so intense as to take the character of hatred in its despair and agony of hopelessness—whelmed me with waters which fate had poisoned, but which had else been of sweetest and purest flow.

What need to repeat the tale? I was Luxmoor's wife when I first saw Scarlatt Suett at Plas Newydd—Luxmoor's fugitive, hunted victim rather! An irresistible attraction drew us together; and since I knew myself to be the bondswoman of such a monster, and concealed the fact from Scarlatt, it was not without reason that he laid so much of the blame of the misery to both of us, that was to follow that short, ineffable dream, upon me. It was then that for the first time I knew what it was to love. I never loved Luxmoor, whatever I may have feigned to yourself, to excuse the vile subjection in which I was known to be held by him—to cover projects and a passion I ought never to have cherished. The sympathies of our relative position, in a great household, isolated by the prejudices of caste from all around us—the exasperating rivalry and persecution of Madame Le Crampon

—the man's own artifice and craft—urged and dragged me into the pit of perdition I found in my union with Carolus Luxmoor! Not love—not love! Never could I have been so ignorant of what my heart needed!—so worthless myself as to have loved that wretch! Supreme Judge of the hearts Thou hast fashioned! was it indeed an inexpiable crime that I yielded for a while to the overpowering sweetness of the sentiments inundating my heart!—lingered a few hours of celestial happiness on the golden islet, in that dark and swollen sea, that was rising on all sides around, to engulf me for ever in its sunless depths!

Oh! and indeed, Hugh-Helena, you are mistaken, if you imagine that the regard and tenderness I have expressed for you, at every stage of our opposed and yet mingled destinies, has not been sincere. I cherished you always as the dearest of sisters, and at the same time the choicest of nature's masterpieces! I thought I resigned to you every earthly hope of happiness of my own with the man I loved. And can you imagine, verily, that I returned from my long exile with projects of rivalry and vengeance on you and yours? Believe me, I re-

turned, as I deemed, only to look again upon the faces I had loved, and to die! The terrible malady, which is consigning me at this hour to the grave, had already commenced its ravages in my constitution, though not yet developed into any certain form. And surely, surely, death is a fact that cannot be discredited!

But who can defend a whole existence in the few words remaining to me to utter? Over that other, but nobler ruin—the hero boy, who reposes in his bloody grave in the east—what lamentation can I pour that will not sound to you only the howl of the desart hyena over its mangled prey? Poor, poor Vivian! After having been on his guard against me all his life, I cheated him of the only wealth his generous heart ever coveted as its own—but that was a diamond beyond all price—his honour! But for my desperate suggestions—my assurances that you loved him well enough to pardon him all that he might do to effect your liberation from the man he hated, and union with himself—what force of eloquence or of torture could have induced him to act the part he played in your betrayal? Yet—God forgive me, if you cannot, Hugh-Helena!—I believed all that I said.—I

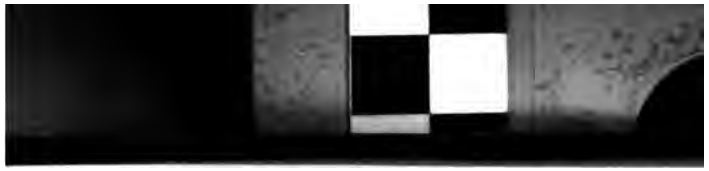
believed you loved and preferred Vivian Ap Howel to your husband—to all the world! And what was there that I would not—had not—pardoned to the man I loved?

Farewell!—this is a vain rhapsody. The returning day breaks, and already I discern *your*—merciful heaven! is this no dream?—and *my* unhappy husband, alone with his perturbed thoughts, pacing the terraces below.—Insensible to all the sweetness of nature, the grandeur and state around him—he presents his haggard and wo-begone face to the sun which lights—he fears, and I know—the last day of a woman he has loved so fatally too well! And now take from me one dying assurance which may comfort you, Hugh-Helena!—may incline you some day to afford *him* consolation too. He will need it—and your children are his also still!—Scarlatt took not, knowingly, any part in your betrayal! He believed in your guilt! every external circumstance was against you! He believed too readily, perchance—was too inexorable!—But is not the judgment of God also upon him?—See! one of the executioners joins him!—and he is compelled to smile and be of good cheer, and talk, it may be, of the

extent of his domains, spreading broad and glistening under the rosying dawn!

Ah, would I could believe now, Hugh-Helena! in the doctrine of expiation the church you have embraced teaches! Set the misery of my existence against these few short months of guilty happiness, and the fiend himself will stand mute in my accusation!

Think of what I suffered in the year of my first union with Luxmoor!—during your wooing with Scarlatt—during that terrible wedding tour, when I was condemned to the spectacle of your happiness, myself in the power of a loathsome satyr, whose heart and mind exhaled the miasma of every species of immorality! Remember me at Llanhowel—when I kissed your child, of whom Scarlatt Suett was the father! —Oh, I needed indeed to be loved by your children!—and did you dream my purpose was to win their consoling tenderness from yourself, their mother?—Recall the horrors of that ghastly trial, when a measureless injustice received as it were the stamp and approbation of the divinity that should inspire law! View me through all those long, solitary, aching-hearted years of exile! Reckon up, if you will, all that



intervenes of a dark and perturbing triumph—of a struggle whose successes were not joys—wherein to fail was mortal—And behold me now, in this sumptuous chamber, overlooking this fair landscape—this broad temple of nature, which has been too, too much my divinity—awaiting the certain approach of doom!

Ah, why are human laws so merciless? How different might all have been if, when I fled from Luxmoor—when to all moral intents and purposes my union with him was dissolved—it had been so in law also?

Cruel and remorseless laws have done this for me—for you—for all whom the misfortune of my position has involved! Will they never be changed? Will no hero of civilization arise—no statesman, worthy of the name—who despising the interested and superstitious clamour certain to howl and hiss around him in the effort—will resolve to restore to woman some portion of the rights due to the human form she bears? Perhaps if even but one such ghastly example as I present were set before the world—But it is too late! Death taps even now at my door—though so softly, so cautiously, with such anxious tenderness!—I

lack the time, even if I had the courage, to execute such a work—to lay bare the throbbings of that one lacerated heart, whose tale is the tale of thousands in its anguish—though heaven forbid it should be also in its guilt!

Farewell, Hugh-Helena! Remember some day that I loved you best, though I injured you most, and that the wronger is always more unfortunate than the wronged! You cannot, you ought not to forgive me! But some day, I know, you will ask forgiveness for me where your consoling faith teaches you it is to be found even for the worst not wholly reprobate! I repent and I die! But until you ask it for me of heaven, I dare not, and I do not hope for more mercy at its tribunals than I have received from those of men!

THE END.

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